

**LIVES AND LEGENDS OF  
APOSTLES AND EVANGELISTS**

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# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION



# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

“ And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James the son of Alphæus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James. These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren ” (Acrs i. 13, 14).

**I**N this brief statement we have the record of that first assembly of human souls whose life missions were to revolutionize history and whose influence was to reach out into eternal days.

Dr. H. H. Milman has but voiced the universal judgment of enlightened men when he writes :

“ So entirely indeed has the whole framework of society been modified by the introduction of Christianity, that it is impossible to trace all its remote bearings upon the habits and character of mankind. The philosophic observer of the human race can discover no event in the whole course of its history so extensively influential as the promulgation of that religion which was preached by the Apostles of Christ.” <sup>1</sup>

Yet we know that these men were for the most part simple, rough, untutored fishermen, with no

<sup>1</sup> Bampton Lecture, 1827.

knowledge of life beyond the limits of a small province in Palestine, under the heel of Rome.

We know that they shared with common humanity characteristics of selfishness, fear, anger, jealousy, doubt, despondency, ignorance, and dense materialism, and that no worldly administrator would have chosen a single one of them to place in a position of authority and trust. In no way was the divinity of Christ Jesus more miraculously manifest than in His love for these men, and in the marvellous transformation of their mortal natures into qualities and attributes which in their spiritual power and goodness were able to withstand the persecution of priests and princes, and establish the Messiahship of the healing Christ upon earth.

That Jesus was able to keep the little circle of disciples whom He had chosen in unbroken fellowship is a testimony to the omnipotence of Love, and is in itself an evidence of immortality. The spark of the Divine in man responds spontaneously to the call of goodness: hearts glow and lips burn with fervent devotion to the ideal of a larger life; but when the first vision is clouded by the old material images, when earth-born habits and modes clamour for indulgence, and finite reason argues for its own egotistic satisfaction, then the heavenly fire dies down, the flames of affection quench themselves in the mists of conflicting argument, and nothing is left but the grey ashes and dry husks of mortality with which to construct the substance of life.

For this reason Jesus ceased not to teach that "it

is the Spirit that quickeneth ; the flesh profiteth nothing," and added that "no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father" (John vi. 65). Then, when many of His followers fell away from Him because of this saying, with what yearning must He have turned to the Twelve with the question, "Will ye also go away?" with what joy must He have received Simon Peter's impetuous reply, "Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life."

With a heart of tenderness and longing more deep and overwhelming in its tenacious affection than a mother's for a wayward son, Jesus continued to pray for Peter's spiritual dominion, and in the last days of sacrifice committed these beloved spiritual children into the keeping of God before He commended His Own spirit into the same Almighty care. The words are some of the most beautiful, most solemn in all the Gospel :

"And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are.

"While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name : those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition ; that the scripture might be fulfilled" (John xvii. 11, 12).

In sublime, triumphant faith the Master bequeathed His teaching to these twelve disciples. As

Dr. Mackintosh Mackay has said: "Christ wrote no books to embalm His thoughts, and yet they were more worthy to live than ten thousand books. And they have lived. How? He did not write on paper. No; He wrote on the tablets of human hearts. That parchment seems frail, and yet after all it is the only durable substance in the world."

In the face of these facts so intimately interwoven with the profoundest human emotions and desires of the greatest lover of mankind, so victoriously witnessing to the power of Spirit to claim and preserve its own image and likeness, and fraught with the religious redemption and destiny of the whole wide world, it is only fitting and natural that we should wish to learn something of the life-stories of these twelve chosen disciples.

We long to discover where each one laboured, their several experiences, just how and when they converted the heathen, established churches, and taught the multitudes of earth to breathe the first pure air of Christianity. We would like to know how they looked, what clothes they wore, what food they ate, if they ever saw any of their own kith and kin again, and in what way the spirit of the Master guided their actions and decisions. Alas! alas! the records are so faint and few, that one small passage from the early historian Eusebius practically includes all that is known about them with actual certainty:

"The Apostles and disciples of the Saviour

scattered over the whole world, preached the Gospel everywhere.”<sup>1</sup>

For the rest we have only legends and traditions, and a mass of documents purporting to be their acts or gospels, all written long after the first century. But, as Dr. Milman has pointed out: “Tradition, however an unfaithful or uncertain preserver of characters and events, is rarely an inventor,” and it is possible by exercising patience and intuition to glean from old traditions and stories some mellow sunlit sense of original truth. By a careful study of the Gospels and Acts in the New Testament we may form very definite ideas of the nature and character of the chief Apostles. We may read for ourselves the history and customs of the times in which they lived, and then, by appealing to the psychology of human nature—that is to say, by holding in ourselves some knowledge of how truth acts upon human motives and concerns to-day—we can gain a sense of what probably took place in those far-off centuries.

It is not the purpose of these pages to rehearse the sayings and events belonging to the disciples in the Gospels or Epistles. The Scriptures are open for all to read and study at will. Many earnest, gifted Christians have written the most illuminating analyses of the life and work of the Apostles as they appear within the Bible itself. It has rather been the author's aim to place within reach of all some of the stories and descriptions of apostolic labours which lie smothered in sectarian tradition, or which emerge

<sup>1</sup> Eusebius, *H.E.* iii. 1.

in odd fragments from the hands of critical scholars and scholarly critics :

“ I leaned on the turf,  
I looked at a rock  
Left dry by the surf ;  
For the turf, to call it grass were to mock :  
Dead to the roots, so deep was done  
The work of the summer sun.”

and to the critic pure and simple authentic knowledge of the first Christian Churches seems as bare and barren as this dry rock of which Browning writes. But the poet looks for life even by the dead stone, and soon his thought becomes conscious of the presence of wings :

“ On the rock they scorch,  
Like a drop of fire  
From a brandished torch,  
Fall two red fans of a butterfly :  
No turf, no rock : in their ugly stead,  
See, wonderful blue and red ! ”

and we, reading again the sayings and chronicles of after-centuries, while we put aside the inventions of the personal prelate, or the superstitions of the romancing story-teller, the day-dreams of a decaying monasticism, or the weapons forged by the bigot and the dogmatist—while we eschew all these things—may yet claim some measure of winged inspiration, and end our researches in the spirit in which Browning ends his poem :

“ Is it not so  
With the minds of men ?  
The level and low,  
The burnt and bare, in themselves ; but then  
With such a blue and red grace, not theirs—  
Love settling unawares ! ”



## CHAPTER II

JAMES "THE LORD'S BROTHER"



## CHAPTER II

### JAMES "THE LORD'S BROTHER"

**I**T has not perhaps been fully realized how much teaching Jesus gave His disciples after He was risen from the dead. The period between His resurrection and ascension is so briefly noted in the Gospels and Acts, the impression of the risen Saviour appearing only in transcendental visions is so acceptable to our earthly conceptions, that we are in danger of forgetting that there were long days of intimate association and instruction when each disciple's mentality was enlightened, enlarged, and purified by the Master, before He vanished beyond human recall. The first chapter of the Acts tells us that

"he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen : to whom also he showed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God : and, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me."

We can therefore understand with what fervent affection, what solemn resolution, what spiritual

ardour the disciples banded together at Jerusalem, having all things in common, striving to prove in living and preaching the ever-presence of Christ. It is generally conceded that they remained in this fellowship twelve years, until, under the persecution of Herod, in which James the son of Zebedee was beheaded, the Apostles went out on their missionary journeys to the pagan world, and James "the Lord's brother" took the government of the Assembly or Mother-Church of Jerusalem.

It is by no means easy to determine exactly which James is meant. He is sometimes confused with James the son of Alphæus, one of the Twelve, often called "James the Lesser" to distinguish him from the brother of John. But this Lesser James is credited with having preached in Egypt; tradition even goes so far as to say he reached Spain; and these assertions would be wholly incompatible with the life of James in Jerusalem. "The Lord's brethren" are distinctly mentioned by St. John. He tells us that they had not believed on Jesus at the time when James Alphæus was already numbered among the Twelve. Undoubtedly this James, appointed by the common consent of the Church the Chief Director, was a blood-relation of Jesus. The fact of this being so gave him a special right in the eyes of the assembly, and his being apart from the circle of the Twelve prevented any feeling among them as to who should be considered the greater, or assume authority, even in matters of purely practical administration. Moreover, he was a most holy, consecrated

character. Eusebius, quoting from Hegesippus, tells us that he was a Nazirite, as John the Baptist had been, neither drinking wine nor eating meat. If he was slow to acknowledge Jesus as the promised Messiah, it was probably because his human goodness and devotion to the religion of the Temple was so sincere, and he could not bring himself to believe that a member of his own family was the Desire of all Israel. But his full conversion may have taken place when he saw that Jesus' death and resurrection absolutely fulfilled scriptural prophecy, and then, to a nature already especially endowed with spiritual aspiration, he was able to join the inestimable gift of a right understanding of that One Whom the Father "had sent."

It was after His resurrection that Jesus declared: "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth," and this conversion of James is one of the signs of this Divine power. Among religious experiences there are none more difficult than to bring a saintly character, fully satisfied with an old form of theology, to that point of vision where it would yield to a higher and more spiritual form. The sinner and the atheist, in need of comfort and relief, will accept a new truth far more readily. Therefore when we see James, a devout and zealous Jew, fully persuaded that his own kinsman in the flesh is the promised Messiah, ready to serve the little assembly of humble, unworldly followers of this new faith, and to give them the protection of his good name and his experience—indeed, his whole-hearted and selfless devotion—we gain a glimpse of the glorious power of

supreme good drawing out the latent, undeveloped human goodness, brushing away the cobwebs of tradition, and setting it free from prejudice and fear, to diffuse itself in radiant showers of benediction and joy.

There are several indications in the New Testament that James held the position of chief Director of the first Church at Jerusalem. Peter is especially anxious to send him the news of his wonderful deliverance from prison: "Go and show these things to James, and to the brethren" (Acts xii. 17). Paul mentions, in the first chapter of his Epistle to the Galatians, that three years after his conversion he went up to Jerusalem and stayed fifteen days with Peter, but saw none other of the Apostles "save James the Lord's brother."

St. Paul tells us moreover that James had a special individual vision of our Lord after He had risen ". . . he was seen of James, then of all the apostles" (1 Cor. xv. 7).

St. Jerome, quoting from the Hebrew Gospel of the Nazarenes, explains that James had solemnly vowed that from the time he drank the cup at the Last Supper, he would eat no more bread till he saw the Lord risen from the dead. Our Lord therefore, having risen from the grave, appeared to him, and commanding bread to be set before Him, blessed it, broke it, and gave it to him, saying, "Eat thy bread, my brother, for the Son of Man is truly risen from among those that sleep." This story calls for some analysis on our part before it can be accepted even

in part, because we must remember that it is quite impossible that James ever partook of the Last Supper. It is only the twelve Apostles who kept that solemn passover with Jesus. It is far more possible that the vision granted to James concerned the last lingering doubt as to the Messiahship of Jesus the Christ, and that he never fully surrendered all trust and allegiance to the Master until he was spiritually and literally convinced of the Resurrection.

James' untiring ministrations were continued for nearly thirty years, his martyrdom occurring about A.D. 61 or 62; and when we sometimes wonder why the knowledge of the love of God was not sufficient to deliver such a faithful servant from violent death, we must remember the long years of protection and preservation passed right in the heart of Jerusalem during a period of seething Pharisaism, fanaticism, and unrest. During that time the High Priesthood was possessed by the family of Annas. No less than six sons of that house filled the chief office, and Caiaphas, who reigned at the time of the Crucifixion, was a son-in-law. We may read graphic descriptions of these Temple aristocrats, of their greed and their avarice, of the booths they erected within the Temple courts, and the monopoly they exercised over all the articles for sacrifice, fattening and battenning on the spoils of ritualism, arousing bitter resentment in the poorer kinsfolk. It was one of these younger Annas who summoned the Sanhedrin together shortly before Albinus, the new ~~Governor~~, was

scheduled to arrive, and condemned the Christian Apostles as violators of the laws.

The death of James, according to Eusebius, Clement, and Hegesippus, was brought about by the following nefarious means. He was placed upon a wing of the Temple in order that he might instruct the visitors and strangers at the paschal feast concerning the heresy of Jesus of Nazareth. Had James renounced our Lord, he might for that one occasion have escaped with his life; but when they called him James the Just Man, and asked him to speak concerning the "vulgar error," the loyal witness "lifted up his voice on high and said: 'Why do ye ask me respecting Jesus, the Son of Man? He is now sitting in the heaven, on the right hand of great power, and is about to come on the clouds of heaven.' " The Christians in the crowd set up a loud "Hosanna to the Son of David!" and the Pharisees and Scribes saw the miscarriage of all their deep-laid plot. In rage and fury they rushed upon him and cast him headlong down the Temple steps, and while, bruised and battered, he knelt praying for his enemies, a man in the crowd killed him with a fuller's stick.

There is to this day on the east side of Jerusalem a deep and gruesome valley—the Valley of Jehosaphat. It is the great graveyard of the ages, an arid, dark, desperate pit, where rows upon rows of sordid dusty graves lie out on its sloping rocks, a picture of mortal, remediless despair.

The traveller may come out from St. Stephen's



Gate, skirt the Garden of Gethsemane, and follow a footpath down this valley, along the dried-up bed of the brook Kidron. Close to the Garden of Gethsemane he will come upon the tomb of James. Whether this is really the last resting-place of the mortal remains of the first Pastor of Christianity who can say? The tomb looks, as one writer has described it, "like an Italian loggia cut out of the solid rock, with two columns in Doric style." Close by are the tombs of Absalom and the Prophet Zechariah. Archæologists find it difficult to determine at what period these structures were built, or indeed if they are really tombs at all.

From the dead dust of earth it is well to turn our thoughts spiritward, and to dwell rather upon that noble Epistle which has remained a living monument to the thoughts and character of the brother of the Lord.

It is a truly noble work, harmonizing in a marked manner the Old Testament with the new Gospel of Christ. It insists that faith in the ancient law or commandments without being manifest in definite practical works is void. It expects faith to be proved in the reformation of individual character, and in the healing of sickness and sorrow. The mercy-seat of the old worship, which hung aloof from the congregation in clouds of awe and mystery between the Cherubims of the Ark, pours out in Christ its comforting balm, washing away the demarcations of rule and ceremony and social caste in floods of spiritual loving-kindness, in a meek and

steadfast sincerity, that places the amelioration of pain far above the letter of any doctrine.

“ Pure religion, and undefiled, before God and the Father, is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world ” (Jas. i. 27).

There is an ancient liturgy bearing the name of James, first translated into English by Dr. Rattray and Dr. Neale in the nineteenth century, which brings us some faint echo of worship in the first Mother-Church at Jerusalem, or at least in the first Christian assemblies in Palestine. The sweet, earnest spirit of James is certainly breathed through such a petition as this :

“ For them that bear fruit and do good deeds in the holy Churches of God, that remember the poor, the widows and the orphans, the strangers and them that are in need ; and for them that have desired us to make mention of them in our prayers . . . and they that carry on their struggle in the caves and dens and holes of the earth. . . .<sup>1</sup>

“ For Christians that sail, that journey, that are strangers, and for our brethren that are in bonds, and exiles and imprisonment, and bitter slavery, their peaceful return.”

Twice in the liturgy the prayer occurs : “ For the peace of the whole world and the unity of the holy Churches of God.”

Its Jewish character is shown in this passage with its references to the patriarchs of the Old Testament :

<sup>1</sup> This clause was probably added in the fourth century.

"Yea, O God, look upon us, and have regard to this our reasonable sacrifice, and receive as Thou didst receive the gifts of Abel, the sacrifices of Noe, the priestly offerings of Moses and Aaron, the peace-offering of Samuel, the repentance of David, the incense of Zacharias : as Thou didst receive from the hand of Thine Apostle this true worship, thus receive also from the hands of us sinners, in Thy goodness, these gifts that are laid before Thee. . . ."

"And do Thou, uncovering the veils of enigmas which mystically surround this holy rite, make them gloriously manifest to us : and fill our intellectual eyes with incomprehensible light, and having cleansed our poverty from every pollution of flesh and speck, make it worthy of this fearful and dread ministration, for Thou art the God of exceeding tender mercy : and to Thee we send up the glory and giving of thanks to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, now and for ever."

It is impossible for us to ascertain with any certainty the chief place of assembly of the Jerusalem Mother-Church. It is most probable that there was no fixed place, but that the believers met with the disciples in several houses in groups and bands, and that all of them still attended the regular services in the Temple.

When we search the Acts for information we find such passages as these :

"And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together ; and they

were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness " (Acts iv. 31).

After the Apostles' first deliverance from prison (Acts iv. 19), and Gamaliel had persuaded the Council to let them alone, the chapter ends with this verse :

"And daily in the temple and in every house they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ."

Then again, when Peter had the special and miraculous deliverance from prison, and he found himself a free man standing in the street, the text reads :

" . . . when he had considered the thing, he came to the house of Mary the mother of John, whose surname was Mark, where many were gathered together praying."

The Church existed in those days not so much as a place as a state of mind, an assembly in thought and in spirit of all those who believed that Christ Jesus was " the Son of the living God."

Even in the scanty knowledge we possess of these first years after the Ascension, we have material for some profound reflection. Our Master founded His Church on the rock of spiritual understanding, which Peter expressed in his recognition of Christ as the Son of God. He did not organize a material Church. Even when the assembly of believers consolidated into a compact body, a definite community with practical needs, it was not one of the Twelve who was appointed the chief minister. It was the disciple closest to Jesus in the human line of the flesh,

foreshowing thereby that any Church or organization belongs only to the human sense of life, and stands as a temporal measure ministering to human needs—needs which will be outgrown and dispensed with as the soul gains supreme dominion, and in the power of Christ "overcomes the world." Yet, as mercy was the keyword of the Epistle of James, so also was it the essence of his ministration, for God does not despise the human need, but meets it at every stage of man's journey heavenward. Could there have been a more signal proof of the Father's protecting care and supply than in this appointment of James as head of the outward Church, a man who enshrined a deep love and reverence for all the revelations of God to His people Israel from earliest times, and whose spiritual life flowed like a peaceful river from its ancient source into the new channel of the new dispensation, conscious that the light which shined in Seth and Noah, and Abraham and Moses, was shining on through the ages, to glow in full effulgence in the redeeming Life of the "Branch" of David's line? With what spiritual insight might we not build our homes and our churches, and keep them filled with the animus of their first spiritual conception, could we fully realize, as James realized, that—

"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning" (Jas. i. 17).



## CHAPTER III

### THE APOSTLE PETER AND THE CHURCH OF ANTIOCH





## CHAPTER III

### THE APOSTLE PETER AND THE CHURCH OF ANTIOCH

OF all the twelve Apostles none perhaps excites such genuine interest as Peter. His character at once so courageous and emphatic, so fiery and impetuous, confident at one moment and craven the next, embracing a mind swayed by all the primitive emotions—love and devotion, daring and desertion, exalted vision, despairing fear, sin, remorse, repentance—all makes a direct appeal to our own human nature. We want to know, the whole world is wishful to know, what happened to Peter. Remembering the solemn, thrice-repeated charge given him by the Master on the resurrection morning, “Feed my sheep,” it is of special import to us to learn how this charge was carried out. And at the outset a statement must be made which may sound startling to many : Peter was never Bishop of Rome ; of Antioch, maybe—but of Rome, never. It is even doubtful if he ever went to Rome at all, but such a strong tradition exists that he was crucified there in Nero’s reign, that it is probable he entered the Imperial city for the first time the last year of his life. There is no mention of him by Paul in the Epistle to the Romans,

nor in any other letter of that Apostle dated from Rome, and references by Ignatius or Denys of Corinth referring to Peter's sojourn at Rome are either apocryphal or invalidated by further historical errors. But there is distinct reason to believe that Peter laboured in that Church where he himself states he was working at the time of his writing his First Epistle General, namely—Babylon. The name may be taken in a perfectly natural way. Occurring as it does in the most matter-of-fact ending to his letter, it is not used in any metaphorical or prophetic sense whatever. Peter was not at that moment indulging in any super-sensible vision or metaphysical illustration. The Epistle simply ends thus :

“ By Silvanus, a faithful brother unto you, as I suppose, I have written briefly, exhorting, and testifying that this is the true grace of God wherein ye stand.

“ The church that is at Babylon, elected together with you, saluteth you ; and so doth Marcus my son ” (1 Pet. v. 12, 13).

Peter had devoted himself almost exclusively to literally “feeding” the Master’s “sheep”—the Jews themselves. That he should have journeyed so far afield as ancient Babylonia is not so unbelievable when we realize what a great colony of Jews had sprung up in the once far-famed capital. We learn from the historian Josephus that thousands of Jews had emigrated there. It must have been a most important colony, since two strongholds held the safe keeping of the offerings destined for the Temple at

Jerusalem ; and this treasure was sent to Judæa with an escort of several thousands to preserve it from robbery in transit. The learned Dr. de Pressensé gives it as his opinion that Peter had passed by the Churches of Asia Minor founded by Paul, and had succeeded in founding a Christian Church at Babylon in the midst of the Jewish colony there ; that afterwards he was joined by Silas, one of Paul's companions, and learning from him of the critical condition of the Churches in Asia Minor, he was impelled to address to them a letter of exhortation and comfort.

Of Peter's sojourn in Antioch we may also feel somewhat certain. During the early years, when the infant Church still remained in Jerusalem, Peter went out into Judæa and neighbouring places to preach. He seems to have been an ardent home missionary. At Lydda, as we learn from the Acts, he cured Eneas the cripple ; at Joppa he raised Tabitha from the dead. It was in this place also that he received the vision from heaven which resulted in the conversion and baptism of Cornelius, the centurion of Cæsarea.

The full significance of this conversion will be appreciated when it is remembered that the disciples had not yet realized that the Master's teaching had broken the bonds of Jewish tradition. They had continued themselves in all the Jewish observance of the Law, and the discovery that the Gospel embraced the Gentile world as well as the Jewish nation was startling in the extreme, and was the cause of the

first great controversy in the company of faithful believers. Peter's receptivity to world-salvation, and his consequent sympathy with Paul of Tarsus, the great Apostle of the Gentiles, might lead him naturally to visit Antioch, for it was in Antioch, the great capital city of ancient kings, as famous and important on the Syrian shore of the Mediterranean as Alexandria was on the Egyptian coast, that among the Greek converts the true breadth of the new teaching became spontaneously apparent, as we learn from the eleventh chapter of the Acts "the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch." Salvation was understood to depend on Jesus Christ being the Son of God rather than the Son of David. St. Paul summed up the entire position when he wrote to the Galatians :

"For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature."

Respecting the foundation of the Church at Antioch, we must go back to the day of Pentecost, when strangers were gathered in Jerusalem from all parts of the world : "Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God " (Acts ii. 10, 11).

It was the Hellenist Jews of Cyprus and Cyrene who established the Gospel in Antioch. We read in the eleventh chapter of Acts :

"Now they which were scattered abroad, upon the

persecution that arose about Stephen, travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only."

The Church at Jerusalem, hearing that many converts were gained, then sent, not an Apostle, but the simple evangelist Barnabas, the whole-hearted Levite from Cyprus, who sold his land and laid the money at the Apostles' feet. Barnabas greatly helped and encouraged the young workers, then feeling no doubt that the need for an experienced teacher and preacher was great as the numbers increased. He set out for Tarsus to seek Paul, and, returning with him, they spent a whole year there, and "assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people"; and it was then that the disciples became known as Christians.

From Antioch, Paul and Barnabas set forth on their first missionary journey, returning with a rich harvest of souls to rehearse to their own Church "all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles."

Their steady, devoted ministrations were disturbed by Jews arriving from Judæa and declaring that the new Gentile converts must observe the full laws and ordinances of Moses. It was then that Paul and Barnabas went up to Jerusalem to take counsel with Peter, James, and John. It was then that Peter threw the weight of his experience on the side of freedom, and declared that the yoke of the old covenants should not be put upon the Gentiles, and this enabled Paul to gain a fair hearing, and to tell

of all the glorious works they had been able to do among those of other nations.

James, who was head of the Church at Jerusalem, decided that Paul and Barnabas and Peter were right, and they were given letters to carry back with them to Antioch, to tell the Gentiles that they need not be bound by the law of circumcision.

It was probably after this conference that Peter came to Antioch, and, as we see from Paul's Epistle to the Galatians, he lived freely with the Gentiles, until Jews coming again from Judæa, the controversy between Jew and Gentile broke out anew, and that curious trait of moral cowardice in Peter showed itself once more. He was ready to withdraw himself from Gentile company, "fearing them which were of the circumcision," but Paul, the lion-hearted Paul, "withstood him to the face," and would not allow him to deny the heavenly vision which had inspired Peter to give baptism to Cornelius, and to guide the splendid decision of the Council at Jerusalem. Peter was forced to abide by his better judgment. Shortly after these events Paul set off with Silas on a second missionary tour, confirming the Churches in Syria and Cilicia.

Peter probably remained for a few more years at Antioch. With Paul, Barnabas, Mark, and Silas absent, there would be great need of his services in this ever increasingly important Church. The Acts are silent on this point, and Eusebius only tells us that he preached to the Jews of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Bithynia, Cappadocia, and Asia, and

that he at length came to Rome (*Eccl. Hist.*, bk. iii. chap i.), but the records of the Patriarchate of Antioch are vehement in their insistence on Peter's residence there as bishop.

The records of the Eastern Church available to English readers are few. That indefatigable historian, Dr. J. M. Neale, passed away before he was able to shape a collection of material on the subject into book form. The task was taken up by the Rev. George Williams, Fellow of King's College, Cambridge, in 1873, together with Dr. Lightfoot, and to Dr. Williams we owe this excerpt from the Greek of Constantius, Patriarch of Antioch :

“ Peter the Apostle first administered the Episcopate of Antioch, then leaving Enodius as his successor in that office, he departed into Upper Asia to the Jews in the Dispersion, that he might deliver the doctrine of the Gospel to them ; and since Antioch first received the Chief Bishop, surely she should rather have the Primacy, forasmuch as Peter was Bishop there before he was in Rome. Enodius, A.D. 53, in the time of Claudius Cæsar, was consecrated Bishop of Antioch by Peter, for those of the Hebrews who believed, when they who of old had been called Nazarenes and Galileans were first called Christians in Antioch.”

A Russian pamphlet printed at Moscow in 1845, translated by Olga, daughter of Admiral Count Pontiatine, and revised by Deacon Basil Popoff, corroborates this tradition :

. . . “ The See of the Church of Antioch derives

its origin from the Apostle Peter. He was the first that preached the word of God here [this we know from the Acts was not correct], wrought miraculous cures, established an Episcopate. Till his departure for Rome he resided for the most part either at Jerusalem or at Antioch. Treading in the footsteps of the Apostle Peter, the Apostles Barnabas and Paul laboured in Antioch. [We know the reverse order was the true fact of the case.] During a whole year they assembled in the church of that town, taught numbers of people, and their disciples in Antioch were the first to be called Christians, so that this blessed name originated in these parts, and from Antioch spread over the universe. There is to be found to this day that gracious spring of water which was brought forth by the prayers of St. Paul for the baptism of Antiochians. It still bears the name of this Apostle."

Supposing, therefore, that Peter did spend some years in Antioch, it would be entirely natural and probable that he should afterwards strike out across Syria into Mesopotamia, skirting the desert, and come southward down to Babylon, to the important colony of Jews there, since he had always felt himself to be the especial Apostle of the Jews, as Paul was to be to the Gentiles and to Israel dispersed in the Isles.

Babylon — "the golden city," "the glory of kingdoms," "the praise of the whole earth," "Babylon with her hundred gates of solid brass, her great walls thirty-five feet high, on which six chariots could drive abreast"—was a heap of ruins in Peter's day, and even all trace of these ruins was fast disappearing in the desert sand. Lucian, who wrote in



the second century, said of it : " Babylon will soon be sought for and not found, as is already the case with Nineveh."

Upon a grave of buried empire, Peter was preaching to merchants of an exiled and wandering race of that stone kingdom, the Rock of Ages, which was eventually " to rule all nations and kingdoms."

From this comparatively obscure and isolated outpost Peter probably came to Rome the last year of his life. The tradition that he died at Rome is so strong that both Irenæus and Tertullian assert it, as well as many other writers whose authority is more doubtful.

It may have been on his way that he preached, as we have already mentioned Eusebius informs us, " to the Jews in the dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Bithynia, Cappadocia and Asia," and arrived in Rome in the latter part of Nero's reign, when Paul, set at liberty, had left the city.

To this period belongs the legend of his encounter with Simon Magus, the sorcerer.

This arch-magician is supposed to have been the same man mentioned in the Acts, since he was born at Gitton in Samaria, and being exposed by Peter there, he fled to Rome, where, by means of his tricks and impositions, he curried such favour with the populace that he soon became honoured as a god. Justin Martyr tells us that a statue was erected to him bearing the inscription, " To Simon, the Holy God."

From Hegesippus we learn the nature of his encounter with Peter. While it is probably not without some foundation in fact, we must remember

that Hegesippus wrote in the fourth century, and so the story had had several centuries in which to become embroidered. According to the legend, a young nobleman and kinsman of the Emperor lay dead. Simon asserted that he could raise him to life again, and through power of hypnotism he produced the appearance of life in the presence of the people; but Peter told the crowd to remove Simon from the bedside, and the body would then remain without motion. This was done, and the young man was seen to be still a corpse. But Peter, silently praying, then commanded the young man to arise in the name of the Lord Jesus, which demonstration immediately took place. He spoke, walked, and ate, and was restored to his mother. The wicked sorcerer then attempted to fly from the Mount of the Capitol, but Peter, standing in the crowd, prayed that he might no longer deceive the people by such exhibitions, and thereupon the wings which Simon had made himself began to fail him, and he fell headlong to his own destruction, and soon afterwards died.

That Christians raised the dead in the first century has been the deposition of authoritative testimony. That hypnotism can produce almost all earthly phenomena save that of creating life or restoring it is also fairly to be admitted. The story, legendary as it may be, has a psychological realism which is most acceptable to the metaphysical mind. It probably happened.

Equally natural is the fact that this event enraged the terrible Emperor, who would inevitably choose

such an artificer as Simon for his favourite, and who forthwith proceeded to avenge his humiliation by seizing both Paul (who had returned to Rome) and Peter, and casting them into prison.

And now we come to the most touching tradition of all. The Christians in Rome ceased not to urge Peter to make his escape, in order that he might still be of service to the Church in the world at large. Yielding at last to their entreaties, he in some manner not recorded was able to get over the prison wall and come to the city gate. Here, as he was about to pass through and out into the freedom of the open road, a vision arrested him, a vision of the Form he knew and loved best—Jesus Himself. “Lord,” he cried, “whither art Thou going?” The vision replied: “I am come to Rome to be crucified a second time.”

Peter turned back.

His wife was martyred first. As she was led forth, Peter called to her, and comforted her with the words, “Remember the Lord.”

It shows us how little woman’s work was worth in those days that we hear no more than this about such a great Christian soul.

Peter himself was crucified head downwards, at his own request. It is said that a Presbyter named Marcellinus embalmed and buried his body in the Vatican hill,<sup>1</sup> near the Triumphal Way.

To Christendom the loss of such a life seems unnecessary, unhallowed torture and loss, but to Peter it was the great triumph over his besetting weakness,

<sup>1</sup> Mons Vaticanus, a hill on the western bank of the Tiber.

the sin that had struggled within him from the day of his denial of the Master in the high priest's palace, to the hour when he once again was failing to stand in face of persecution and peril. To preach anew to his converts of many cities and many lands, to serve them, to work among them, would have been sweet, but even years of such justifiable labour could not have blotted out the memory of that meeting in the early dawn on the old lake-side, and his Master's soul-searching question, " Lovest thou me ? "

In the consecrated reunion, beyond the portals of the flesh, he could face his Lord with the triumphant knowledge that he had not denied Him again, had not again given way at the last, but had nobly endured. He had proved himself Peter the *Rock*, against whom all the forces of hell had dashed in vain, and had not prevailed to engulf his immortal soul.

But there still remains much to be said of Antioch.

The Patriarchate claims that Peter appointed Enodius in A.D. 53, in the reign of Claudius Cæsar, to be his successor at Antioch, and that he in turn was succeeded by the great Ignatius, who suffered in the amphitheatre at Rome under Trajan.

Controversy has long been engaged in deciding just what type of ministration was expected and received by these first " Bishops " of the early Churches. Their authority was certainly more in the spirit than in the letter. It was only natural that an Apostle or an evangelist, pressing onward to preach in fresh areas, should especially consign the care of

the struggling, ignorant bands of new converts, all seeking help and instruction, to the disciple who seemed to be possessed of devotion, holiness, and spiritual understanding above his fellows, or who was in a position to serve more freely and uninterruptedly than others.

There seemed to be have been a sweet simplicity about the early Christian assemblies.

As late as the second century, divine service in Antioch was performed in private houses, until Theophilus, the seventh Bishop—the scholarly, spiritually-minded Theophilus, whose writings come down to us filled with a remarkable insight into the metaphysical meanings of the Scriptures—seeing that the houses available could not contain all who wished to worship, generously gave up his own house for the purpose.

Antioch soon grew into a centre of chief importance in the Christian world. All Greater and Lesser Asia and all the countries of the East were at first under its jurisdiction. Even after the Patriarchates, both of Constantinople and Jerusalem, had been made and conceded during the reign of the Emperor Justinian, there still remained under the jurisdiction of Antioch one hundred and fifty-three Metropolitan Archbishops and Bishops, besides the Catholici of Seleucia, as far as India and Armenia, Georgia, and the northern part of Asia.

If the traveller is adventurous enough to explore the mountainous land which lies between Antioch, Aleppo, and Apaniei, on the right bank of the river Orontes, he will be rewarded by coming upon magnificent ruins of early Christian cities and churches,

which are known in the country under the names of Jebel Riha, Jebel Ala, Jebel Alaqua, and Jebel Sema'an. No less than a hundred and fifty of the cities are to be found within fifty miles. They are all linked, the one to the other, as the suburbs of London or New York are to-day, and they all belong to the epoch of primitive Christianity, ranging from the third to the sixth century.

From the crumbling, broken heaps we may reconstruct the affluent, comfortable life which obtained as a result of a few hundred years of enlightened faith. There are the sites of large houses, which were built of squared stone. They had galleries, balconies, gardens, wine-presses, kitchens, good stables, and public baths. The churches must have been magnificent. Crosses and monograms are sculptured on most of the doors, scriptural texts adorn the pillars. On the lintel of one small house is the inscription : "The Lord preserve thy coming in and thy going out, from this time forth and for evermore."

At Dell Lonzeh, a ruined town about an hour east of El-Bara, on one portico is : "If God be for you, who can be against you ? Glory to Him always. Lord, succour this house and those who dwell therein. Amen."

Most striking are the sepulchral monuments, executed with beautiful design, cut out of the rock, some of them being built of massive stone. There are no burial cemeteries, and the tombs are not gathered round the churches. They are scattered throughout the cities, in vineyards and olive-yards.

Burial was in itself a Christian custom borrowed from the Jews. The sense of immortality and joy seems to have been vital, and memory to have been full of bright hope for the departed.

At Moufleyeh is a fine sarcophagus with a boldly carved inscription, together with the sign of the Cross, and it reads: "Because thou hast made the Most High thy refuge, no evil shall approach thee—no plague come nigh thy dwelling." When the Rev. George Williams, Fellow of King's College, Cambridge, to whom we are indebted for these descriptions, visited the spot rather more than fifty years ago, it was still in excellent preservation.

There is something inexpressibly awe-inspiring about these ruins, the mystery and the pathos of them. They grip the heart within us as no heathen relics can possibly do. Here lived our brothers and sisters who first named the name of Christ as we name it. They had our Sunday morning, with the household attendance at church; they had our intense affections, the love of home, the joy of relationship and fellowship. The Gospels to them, and the Epistles, were fresh, vital messages. Possibly they had their church bazaars, their collecting-boxes, their Sunday-school treats. The full tide of their busy liberal life rises before us as we map out in mind the great thoroughfares, the courtyards, and public gardens, now only heaps of stones out under the blazing Syrian sky. We remember the prophecy of Habakkuk: "For the stone shall cry out of the wall, and the beam out of the timber shall answer it."

Already the stone is mutely speaking of a splendid Christian civilization, is telling us that seventeen hundred years ago families gathered together and read the 91st Psalm as we read it, loved it as we love it, and carved it up over their doorways.

Of Antioch herself not a trace remains. No ancient city of splendid magnificence has more utterly perished. At one time she could boast of a population of a little short of half a million; her public buildings, civil and religious, rivalled even Imperial Rome; and, though devastated by earthquakes, she rose again and again like the immortal Phoenix from the ashes. Yet all this glory is vanished. Not a fragment of a column, a cornice, or a frieze remain built into the modern hovels in its few squalid streets, to witness to the mighty past. Even the mediæval castle crowning the height preserves only a scanty trace of the Crusaders' or Saracenic architecture.

Why should these things be? Why should this beautiful, this sacred city, where Christianity, freed from Jewish sectarianism, first emerged into the light of a world-redeeming religion, become but a name, a tradition, smothered in the stones and the dust of merciless oblivion? Simply for this reason: Christianity lost its true spiritual force. Alas! only too terribly soon Christians became absorbed in quarrelling with one another, in condemning each other, splitting hairs over doctrinal definitions, how they were to define Christ the Son of God and Jesus the Son of Man; how they were to combine the Divine and the human in Christ Jesus. They became worldly-



mind, absorbed in outward ordinance—who was to lead, who was to take precedence, who was to have supreme authority.

A page of Antioch's history during the era of the Emperor of Palmyra, in A.D. 260, will suffice to show how fast the spirit of the Master had faded out of conscience, how the demon-spirit of the world and the flesh had taken its place.

Odenathus had raised himself from a humble station to the virtual empire of the East. He had defeated alike the Persian monarch and the Roman legions. He was then murdered by his own nephew. His widow, Zenobia, remained, and the hour of her triumph had dawned. This amazing woman, descended from Cleopatra, and possessing much of the Egyptian queen's charm and prowess, together with still further powers acquired through her education as a Jewess, ruled from her "city of palaces, Tadmor in the wilderness." Under her sway fell Syria, Armenia, and Arabia, as far as the borders of Bithynia. Antioch opened its gates to her. She even added Egypt to her conquests. She declared herself willing to acquire the principles of Christianity, and chose as her instructor Paul of Samosata, the "heretical" Bishop of Antioch. Records descend of this man's boastfulness, luxuriousness, and immorality. Even making due allowances for vilification by his enemies, the picture of his close companionship with the world-dominating Empress has little to remind us of the gentle home at Bethany or of the Early Church at Jerusalem.

The second Council of Antioch, A.D. 269, deposed

Paul and elected Domnus. The clergy of the Church and the congregations of Christians were not consulted in the matter, and Paul remaining under the protection of Zenobia, the new election was difficult to enforce.

The Emperor Aurelian, having overpowered the troops of the Empress Zenobia in battle, Antioch opened its gates to the new victor, and the Catholic Bishops appealed to the secular arms of the Emperor to expel Paul. His followers lingered on in schism and strife until the beginning of the fifth century, and then faded away into silence. Small wonder that the Church, trying to get rid of sin with the sword instead of with the Spirit of God, was in no fit state to resist the fire of the tenth great persecution, when this broke out upon it from Rome :

“ Love your enemy, bless your haters, said the Greatest of the great;  
Christian love among the Churches look'd the twin of heathen hate.”

Eusebius gives a melancholy picture of the Church in the years preceding the fury of Diocletian in A.D. 303. We can read of nothing but the mutual dissensions and follies of bishops, illegal and simoniacal ordinations, the ambitious endeavours of rival Churches for pre-eminence, and every kind of weakness, tyranny, and vice, till we marvel that the whole fabric of the Church did not utterly perish.

If we pursue the melancholy story from century to century, it is but the same tragic history : ravages by Chozroes of Persia, reconquest by Justinian, oppression by the Caliphs of Babylon, excesses of the Latin Crusaders instigated by Rome ; then Saracen,

Jesuit, and Jew, each more cruel than the other, culminating in the supreme cruelty of the Turk, until in 1734 a lone Russian monk, Basil Grigorovitch, has this description to give of Antioch, as he descended upon the city from the mountain way of Lebanon. He had travelled four days, enduring the cold autumn winds and continual rains that had swept the desert of Turcomania. He had crossed the mountains, and then approached the fields of Antioch. On the road, hewn out of the mountain, he found the ruins of a Christian church, and cut on its walls, a last relic of days of vital worship, was a cross with the inscription : "The Cross raises those who fall" ; and Basil Grigorovitch, exhausted and fainting with his desperate journey, took those words, which had survived the rise and fall of prelacies and armies, to his aching heart and poor, numbed, frozen body, and they healed him. Revived, encouraged, with the Master's death and triumph in his thoughts, he pushed on down into Antioch, and sought out the only place of worship remaining to the Christians in the city. It was a cave. During the heat of the day, and for the whole night, the Turkish shepherds drove their flocks into it. At the break of day, and on Sundays, the Christian priest entered stealthily, with his small following. Together they cleaned the cave as best they could, and then held a Christian service. A few hours later the cave was again tenanted by the Turkish shepherds.

The Patriarchate has long been moved to Damascus, but all its sufferings have not caused it to pray for a return of that primal and essential charity, with-

out which Paul has declared the disciples to be "nothing."

From the Russian we learn that "the Patriarch of Antioch has the right to punish the Christians who are subject to his jurisdiction with imprisonment, and by sending them to the galleys. But this right is now almost nominal," the reason being most naively stated, that "any who should be condemned to punishment would immediately join the Unia (a Greek section), and, through the protection of the European Consuls, would escape the execution of their sentence. Hence the Patriarch can only address mild admonitions to offenders, and seek their voluntary submission." And we may add, long may the timely providence of European Consuls, freedom and enlightenment, remain !

The ruins of Antioch are the ruins of every Christian revival which ends in the letter and the form exalted and revered above the spirit, above beatitudes with their gentle reverberations of purity, meekness, righteousness, mercy. There are the ashes of such ruins at many a hearth and in many a life to-day—little sad individual heaps of ashes—the bright flames of endeavour and inspiration quenched by the narrowness, the persecution—the same old persecution under new names—of Christians by Christians. Can intolerance ever cease ? Can we build Antioch once more of those new white stones, our new names, our new natures ?

"Sure stands the promise—even to the meek

A heritage is given ;

Nor lose they earth who single-hearted seek

The righteousness of Heaven."

WHITTIER.

**CHAPTER IV**  
**JOHN THE BELOVED**



## CHAPTER IV

### JOHN THE BELOVED

WHEN the world awakes to the knowledge that a great genius has lived its span of years among the ordinary dwellings, the familiar highways and byways of common humanity, it at once endeavours to seek among the records of his life for signs and fragments of that greatness which has left so dominating and signal an influence in its path. But how seldom is the search rewarded! We may wander round the bare apartment that Beethoven called home, gaze at the scribbles on the shutters, at the ink-stains on the keys of the piano; we may peer, if we will, into the oak-beamed, oak-panelled cottage at Chalfont St. Giles, where Milton wrote the *Paradise Regained*; we may open the door of the little cupboard in a niche of the wall and learn "here he kept his manuscripts"; or we may stand on the great stone flags under another heavily timbered ceiling in little Domrémy, the first shelter that Joan of Arc ever knew—and in what fashion are we the wiser? Can we hear the voices they heard? can we see the visions they saw? The human mind is ever asking for the "piece of a broiled fish and of an honeycomb," the sign the Master gave the Twelve of

His restored identity among them; and when we hold it, or when we see it consumed, behold, it is honey and fish, nothing more, utterly unrelated to the workings of the Spirit, which has in its varying degrees brought the light of immortality to earth.

Therefore we need not perhaps feel such acute chagrin that so little is vouchsafed to us of the life-history of the greatest individuality which has ever sojourned among men after Christ Jesus, the one closest to Jesus' human selfhood and most receptive to His spiritual teaching, John "the beloved disciple," "St. John the Divine."

We may, if we will, reconstruct a home in Jerusalem, whether fronting any of its narrow tortuous alley-ways—the "streets" of the city within the walls—or a more airy dwelling, with a court-yard, shaded with fig and olive leaf, on one of the main rock-strewn roads without the gates. Jerusalem, since the Saviour's Ascension, has been pillaged and sacked by the Roman Emperor Titus; the Temple reduced to ashes. It has come under the rule of the new Eastern Roman Empire, when old Rome fell in A.D. 410. It has been raided and sacked by the fierce Chozroes of Persia in 614. It has been invaded by the Moslem Arabs, and trodden under the heel of Caliph Omar in 637. It has been the contention of Egypt and Assyria and the prey of their Turkish "Condottière." It has been possessed by the Crusaders of Europe, in 1099, and lost again in 1187 to the armies of Saladin; and after the bloodshed and confusion of Mongol armies versus Islam,



Turkey unalloyed, in the House of Osman, has reigned supreme in 1518 until its deliverance in 1917 by the arms of Britain. Therefore we know not where John's house was situated in those days which followed on the Crucifixion. We only know that Jesus gave His Mother into John's care, "and from that hour that disciple took her into his own home."

We have in Xavier's *Persian History of Christ* a description of the Virgin Mary which in its simplicity makes an appeal to our reason far exceeding the beautiful but extravagant exoticism of Italian artists and scribes. He says :

"Mary was of a moderate height and rather florid complexion. Her eyes were large, verging towards blue—her hair auburn—her hands and fingers long and beautiful—her figure symmetrical in every part. Her language was particularly pleasing, her aspect modest and benign, her clothing poor but neat. So much glory and majesty appeared in her person that when the wicked viewed her awful countenance, they reflected and withdrew, and were made different persons. All loved and praised and thought much of her for the excellence and sweetness of her manner and her humility. Lastly, her conversation in public and private was such as for goodness and dignity became the Messiah's Mother."

This picture of a gentle, gracious, exquisitely refined lady, whose moral tone appeared "awful" to the wicked and depraved, and whose sweetness and wisdom caused the good to spontaneously love and praise her, harmonizes with the thought of a home

in Jerusalem which would also have been a church, a peaceful yet active centre, where the disciples and students met freely, remembered Christ's sayings and discussed their meaning; a place where there was neither poverty nor riches, but the brave and beautiful in character counted most, and where Divine benediction and protection shed a glow and a gladness over the simple needs of daily existence.

There was never any question of John leaving his sacred trust to engage in any of the missionary journeys which occupied the other disciples, and this fact is in itself a quiet but powerful testimony that primitive Christianity did not renounce or destroy a single human right or privilege that preserved affection, unity, and joy. It is allowed by all that he remained in Jerusalem until Mary's death. Eusebius dated this event about A.D. 48, but de Pressensé feels that the date is really quite unknown; Nicephorus does not mention any exact year. But if Dr. Lardner is correct in placing John's journey into Asia Minor in A.D. 66, then we may conclude that the martyrdom of James in A.D. 61 or 62 brought about a great change in the Jerusalem Church; that the remaining disciples scattered, returning to their country provinces or going still farther afield; and that the day came when John resolutely turned his back upon an empty house, henceforth to be a house of ineffable and hallowed memories, and went out alone into the great, wild, wide vineyard of the Lord. The lonely majesty of John is very awe-inspiring. We feel it despite the silence of the centuries. Peter had his wife with him,

—a loyal, splendid helpmeet; Philip had his sister Mariamne; Paul had many travelling companions and dearly loved students, like Timothy. He had also a special home circle in the British Palace at Rome, with Celtic Claudia and her Roman husband Pudens. But John began to shed the effulgence of Divine Love amid the pagan darkness of the Greek cities of Asia when all he most loved were beyond earthly vision—his brother James, the first martyr, long since killed by the sword of Herod Agrippa; his precious Lord ascended on high; the beloved Mother no longer of this world. The human picture is very vivid to us, with its deep, heart-searching blanks; but even as we gaze at it a glory of life and love blots out the human page.

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. . . .

“In him was life; and the life was the light of men. . . .

“Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also.”

Then the curtain is lifted once more on an old man in the loneliness of exile on a desolate island, and again glory ineffable streams forth with a measureless joy, vibrating with ethereal melodies, “the voice as of harpers harping with their harps,” and visions arise—the vision of “a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, crying, Salvation to our God,” the vision of those “which came out of great tribula-

tion," that "shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more . . . for the Lamb, which is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them . . . and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

Heavenly revelation extinguishes human history, and we can only acknowledge that, even while John the Beloved Disciple tarried on earth, John the Divine lived with all he knew and loved in heaven.

So far as we can ascertain, his field of work lay in Asia Minor, and in the founding of Churches such as Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea.

The history of these beautiful cities of ancient Grecian culture attracts the student. There is a glamour around them. They are full of colour and life, and the exquisite symmetry of noble architecture. We know that Smyrna to-day is situated on a bay of unrivalled beauty and commerical excellence, and that alone among the ports of Western Asia it has preserved its prestige as the chief clearing-house of Levantine trade. In olden days it boldly stamped itself upon its coins, "the first city of Asia." It equally boldly claimed to be the birthplace of Homer, and showed a cave where the poet is said to have composed the "strong-wing'd music" of his hexameters.

Pergamos was a rich city, the treasure-city of Lysimachus, founder of a family remarkable for fine deeds and proverbial wealth. Eumenes II., a firm friend of the Romans, rendered it famous for the marvellous Library he formed there, held to be second

only to the great and famous library of Alexandria. It is said that skins were first used for writing in this Library of Pergamos, and that from the title given to these sheets, "*Pergamenæ chartæ*," we derive our modern word parchment. This was the Library given by Antony to Cleopatra.

Thyatira seems to have been a city chiefly of commercial interest, but romantic even in its business. How picturesque is the reference in the sixteenth chapter of the Acts to "*Lydia, the seller of purple*"!

Philadelphia was devastated by that scourge of the Near East—earthquakes; but its inhabitants were brave, and resisted alike the thunders of Nature and of the Turk, to whom it did not submit until 1390.

Sardis, the flourishing capital of Lydia, basked in the opulence of wealth and hospitality under the reign of no less an envied king than Cræsus, and, when conquered by Cyrus, simply rolled in lazy content into the lap of Persian luxury. Like a hive of sleepy bees, drugged by their own honey, the inhabitants continued to give their allegiance to whichever race held the victor's palm at the moment, and became Greek under Alexander and Roman after the defeat of Antiochus at Magnesia.

The remains of a Christian church are to be found there, supposed to be that of St. John, the only fragment which remains of any of the "seven churches." Sardis as a city continued her earth-dream until the fourteenth century. It was plundered by the Goths in 400, seized by the Turks in the eleventh century, and afterwards practically

destroyed by the all-terrible Assyrian, Timur. So much for her magnificent gardens, her wealth, her idle intellectuality, her sense-benumbed self-indulgence!

“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world,” spake her prophet; “for all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away and the lust thereof.”

Laodicea, “ad Lycum,” on the river Lycus, to distinguish it from that other Laodicea nearer the centre of the opium trade, was another beautiful worldly city, seated like a queen on her four rivers, shaken by earthquakes, but never wholly removed. She rejoiced in a benefactor, one Hiero (so the historian Strabo tells us) who, not content with adorning her during his life, left in his will 2000 talents for her further embellishment. Her ruins lie still close to the earth’s surface. Some day a second Hiero may spend money on excavating and examining her past splendours.

“Spring and Summer, and Autumn and Winter, and all these old revolutions of earth;

All new old revolutions of Empire—change of the tide—what is all of it worth?

What is it all, if we all of us end but in being our own corpse-coffins at last,

Swallow’d in vastness, lost in silence, drown’d in the deeps of a meaningless Past?”

That the world has hope to-day, an answer to the riddle of mortal existence, a reason for faith in

immortality and the triumph of ultimate Good, is owing to the teaching and life-work of the one obscure Jewish fisherman who paced these cities of Asia Minor, so typical of all wealthy, cultivated, pleasure-loving, trading, bustling, important cities of earth, and gave to the few who would listen the great saving spiritual definition of the God and Creator of the universe, gave to sinning, suffering, dying humanity the one supreme word—Love.

John's headquarters were at Ephesus, the city of West Asia, founded in far-off mythical times by the Amazons, and famed for its magnificent temple to Diana, one of the seven wonders of the world. The temple has perished, the temple of which Pliny wrote that it would take a whole book to describe all its details. It has gone, and all that we know of it is a bit of the courtyard wall, and piece of marble pavement, some of the drums of columns, more than six feet high, fragments overlaid in colour, vermilion and blue; but a testimony to the presence of John there remains in the name of the present site of the old Ephesus, which is Aiosluk, a corruption of Hagios Theologus, meaning Saint John, and which the town bore through the Middle Ages.

There is little record of John's life at Ephesus. It is said that when, at a great age, he was led into the church, in answer to all inquiries concerning the faith he would always answer the one sentence, "Little children, love one another"; and when the people became impatient of this invariable admonition and asked why it was always the same, he replied

that it was the commandment of our Lord, and if this alone was observed, it would be sufficient.

There is a tradition, according to Tertullian, that during the reign of Nero John was brought to Rome and cast into a cauldron of boiling oil, but that he was miraculously preserved from burning, and after this ordeal was banished to Patmos. But modern criticism is inclined to consider this matter wholly legendary, and considers that John was exiled in the time of the great persecution under Domitian.

There is one sweet story related of him by Clement of Alexandria, one which we would gladly believe to be true, especially as it must have been dear to gentle Clement's own heart.

John, during one of his visits to Christian Churches in the neighbourhood of Ephesus, observed a young man, tall of stature, exceedingly good-looking, and possessed of an ardent spirit.

As Jesus had once looked upon the rich young man of "great possessions" and loved him, so John's heart went out to this handsome, forceful youth, hovering on the threshold of spiritual life. He turned to the Elder in charge of the community and said with solemn earnestness: "I commit that young man to thy charge, and call the Church and Jesus Christ to witness that I do so."

The Elder, impressed with the fervour of the Apostle's desires, straightway brought the young man into his house, carefully instructed him in the faith, and finally baptized him into the Church. Whether the form of instruction was too narrow or pedantic,



even in those early times, to really grip the boy's soul, Clement does not tell us, but the sequel to the lad's baptismal service was that he broke loose from Christian restraint, and fell into vicious company, and finally became the chief of a robber band, surpassing his associates in violence and bloodshed. Shortly after these events John had occasion to again visit the Church, and before leaving he turned to the Elder, or Bishop, and said : " Restore to me the trust which I and the Lord committed to thee before the Church over which thou art overseer." The Elder for the moment appeared puzzled. " I ask," he continued, " for the young man whose soul I entrusted to thee." " Alas ! " returned the Bishop, " he is dead," and fell to tears and much sighing. " How dead ? " Even through the age-long centuries John's query comes ringing down to us with a certain fiery, stern anxiety. The answer, weak and fearful, came out : " He is dead to God. He fell away from grace, he was forced to flee the city for his crimes, and he is now a brigand in the mountains."

John immediately quitted the church, and with all possible speed made his way to the mountains, and gave himself up into the hands of the robbers. Dragged before their chief, the young man instantly recognized the Apostle, and, fearing his rebuke, made every effort to escape ; but John, forgetting his old age, and yet with that supreme dignity and drama which only come with magnificent age, pursued him, crying out : " My son, why dost flee from thy father ? I am feeble and far advanced in years ;

have pity on me, my son ; fear not. There is yet hope of salvation for thee. I will stand for thee before the Lord Christ. If need be I will gladly die for thee, as He died for us. Stop, stay, believe ; it is Christ Who has sent me."

The young man, flinging away his weapons, burst into tears. Together they wept and prayed. Together they descended the rough mountain path back to the church gate. When has the strong, understanding, ardently loving appeal of the human heart, backed with the consciousness of the omnipotent love of God, ever failed ? That blending of the human with the Divine had both chosen and preserved the twelve disciples, and the blessing of the Spirit of Truth was sustaining their work among men.

The school of German critics have raised doubts as to both the person of John and the authenticity of the Fourth Gospel and the Apocalypse.

This is not the place to enter into any prolonged controversy on the subject, but it may be said, by way of reassurance for the casual reader, that the burden of proof still rests on the side of the old accepted tradition ; Irenæus, Theophilus of Antioch, Origen, Justin Martyr, the Church of Lyons, and Eusebius all making references which establish John as the author of both Gospel and Revelation. Among critics, Lücke is also in his favour ; and the painstaking and erudite Harnack is not averse from the verdict of the Early Church. When it comes to quibbling over the personality of the Apostle himself—whether John ever lived at all, whether the " beloved disciple " was

not a philosophic ideal rather than an actual human being, or whether the Gospel would not better be assigned to a certain John, a Presbyter of Ephesus—there is one conclusive argument in favour of John the son of Zebedee, which simply sweeps away all minor technical difficulties.

The author of the Fourth Gospel and the Epistle has given a definition of Love to the world which he could only have learnt from close personal contact with Jesus Himself. Moreover, he could only have learnt it by actual experience, by being the beloved of such a remarkable character as history has declared Jesus of Nazareth, Jesus the Christ, to have been. There is no such definition of Love to be found in the writings of any other sage, reformer, priest, or ruler of any age or nation. The seventeenth chapter of the Gospel, and the fourth chapter of the First Epistle, are a challenge to the whole world to lay down a more marvellous definition of Being, to reveal a higher conception of the Creator, than they reveal. It is unparalleled, incomparable, and even to this day the full depth and breadth and height of it is barely glimpsed by the most ardent disciples of its living truth. Where in all other religions among men can we find such a statement as this ?

“ No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us. . . .

“ And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love ; and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him.

"Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment : because as he is, so are we in this world.

"There is no fear in love ; but perfect love casteth out fear : because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.

"We love him, because he first loved us" (1 John iv. 12, 16-19).

Such a line of thought is not human, is not deducted from phenomena of this mortal life. It is a Divine, supersensual, supernatural revelation. It could never have been grasped by hearsay or received by a meandering tradition. It is vibrant with the deep heart-knowledge and experience of the one who speaks. The whole teaching of John on the nature of Love embraces in its philosophy the most supreme self-sacrifice, the most superb triumph over all material conditions, and involves such a life-history, in fact, as we know to have been the record of Jesus of Nazareth. Only one who had been His closest, His most intimate friend, could have received enough of its spirit to have enshrined this teaching in words. And there the words are ! There is no getting away from them. They remain throughout all time, a rock of offence no doubt to the material intellect, but to those who have struggled and prayed for a better world, and for a reasonable and beautiful definition of God, they are a mighty hope, a firm anchor, a sure defence, and a working principle for daily life.

Those who would criticize the authenticity of

John's writings are as foolish as men who would only note the penmanship, the ink and the paper on which a great international treaty should be written, and utterly ignore the subject-matter of the treaty itself. How it is written pales into insignificance before the question, "What does it say?"

It is that which John says which establishes him for ever as the disciple "whom Jesus loved," and who through this love was able to give to the world a conception of God which makes "all things new."

But we need not imagine that John's wealth of affection made him a weak or effeminate character. There is nothing really feminine about John in any emotional or shrinkingly sensitive sense. Indeed the gentle, patient, brooding, feminine qualities of the eternal nature of Deity were revealed at a much later date with the coming of the Comforter, "the Spirit of Truth." The Early Church assigned to him the symbol of the eagle soaring to the sun. Our Lord Himself surnamed both John and his brother James "Boanerges, the sons of thunder" (Mark iii. 17), and in John's vigorous denunciations of false views of Christ in his Epistles, we feel a strong and powerful vitality, an almost rigorous intellect, able to face and to cope with the most forceful assailants.

If we think of a man in modern times who is most closely allied to his spiritual teaching, the choice would undoubtedly fall upon Robert Browning, on the poet and philosopher who wrote :

"I report, as a man may of God's work  
—All's love, yet all's law!"

We know that Browning's personality was strong,\* rugged, almost strenuously vigorous; that he possessed a courageous honesty and hearty social benevolence, combined with majestic dignity, a grandeur of soul that stood out firmly in the surge of everyday humanity, as a fine rock stands out amid ocean breakers. One of his critics, Edward Hæruté, writes of his work :

" . . . Newton reduced the movements of all bodies celestial and terrestrial to the one primal force of gravitation. Some such reduction Browning has achieved with Love as the basal element of all forms of higher life. It is not only the moving force of all forms of activity, but also the clue to every intellectual problem. Love holds together the Universe in rationality and beauty. . . . It is the principle of intelligibility in the world."

It is indeed in the poem "A Death in the Desert," Browning's concept of the passing away of St. John at a great age, that the lines occur which have become such household words among the English peoples :

"For life with all it yields of joy and woe  
And hope and fear—believe the aged friend—  
Is just our chance o' the prize of learning love,  
How love might be, hath been indeed, and is ;  
And that we hold thenceforth to the uttermost  
Such prize, despite the envy of the world,  
And having gained truth, keep truth : that is all."

Yet Robert Browning, fine as he was, is but a pigmy compared with the Apostle John, the great Master Scribe from whom every Christian leader and reformer has drawn his inspiration.

It is supremely comforting to feel assured that the Saint of Ephesus did not die a violent death. In an age of such barbarity and cruelty, when so many Christians perished, it is of untold value to us to know that the disciple who taught and preached Love as the true nature of God and the ever-present Saviour of man, was himself protected and preserved by the love he so wonderfully revealed. There were rumours abroad in his generation that he never died, but was translated, as Enoch or Moses ascended from earth to heaven ; but the most acceptable theory is, that he passed in peace and glory at a great age ; and that while the Church at Ephesus laid away the garments of his mortality, John the Beloved was awake in the New Jerusalem which he had already seen from "a great high mountain" while yet on earth, and whose reality, unfolding in the crystal-clear glory as of a jasper stone, he had transmitted into the safe keeping of the followers of Christ until the "last day."

Lücke has truly pronounced of John, that "he lives and will ever live by his writings, and the future belongs to him even more than the past."





**CHAPTER V**  
**THE APOSTLE THOMAS**



## CHAPTER V

### THE APOSTLE THOMAS

**T**RADITION ascribes to Thomas the preaching of the Gospel in the west of India.

The Acts of Thomas form part of a collection preserved by the followers of the old Magian religion of Persia, and belong probably to the third century. By the ninth century the name of Leucius had become attached to them as the author; but although Leucius may have been responsible for one of the five different works of this collection, it does not follow that he wrote these particular Acts. There is a Greek MS. of these Acts—the Vallicellian at Rome, Bonnet's MS. U of the eleventh century; and a consensus of opinion exists that this is a translation of an ancient Syriac MS. This Syriac version was edited and translated by Wright in his *Apocryphal Acts*. Then, again, a comparison between other Greek copies and the Syriac show a more careful arrangement, which suggests that the Syriac in its turn was a translation of an older and original Greek MS. If we lay aside certain fantasies and embroideries, the account of Thomas's missionary journey is not an impossible one. It has a certain element of interest and fascination about it as a whole which

suggests an original foundation of truth, so let us hear something of his story.

When the Apostles, assembled together at Jerusalem, divided the regions of the world into missionary areas, the lot of India fell to Thomas, and the human interest of the narrative begins at once, for characteristic of the moods and manners of average mortal nature, he did not want to go there. Every argument against such an undertaking presented itself to his perturbed mind. He feared so far a journey; he felt at a terrible disadvantage, knowing only the Hebrew language—in fact, his whole being shrank from the task. As he wrestled and prayed over the question, it seemed that the Saviour appeared to him in a night vision and said to him: "Fear not, Thomas; go thou unto India, and preach the word there, for My grace is with thee." But Thomas still replied, as human nature struggling with his own will and desire invariably replies: "Whither Thou wouldest send me, send me, but elsewhere, for unto the Indians I will not go."

Meanwhile there had arrived in the market-place a merchant from India named Abbanes, who was commissioned by a certain King Gundaphorus (on Greek coins of the first century the name is Hyndopheres) to bring him back a proficient carpenter. At noon this merchant Abbanes sees a man who inquires of him: "Wouldest thou buy a carpenter?" and when he answers him, "Yea," this stranger says to him: "I have a slave that is a carpenter, and I desire to sell him." He points out Thomas in the

distance, and agrees that the price of the sale is to be three litræ of unstamped silver, and he then proceeds to write a deed of sale, which is worded : " I, Jesus, the son of Joseph the carpenter, acknowledge that I have sold my slave, Judas (Thomas) by name, unto thee, Abbanes, a merchant of Gundaphorus, King of the Indians." He then brought Thomas to Abbanes, who said to him, " Is this thy Master ? " And Thomas answered : " Yea, he is my Lord." And he said : " I have bought thee of him." And Thomas was silent. The following day, having prayed, " I will go whither thou wilt, Lord Jesus : Thy will be done," he set sail with Abbanes the merchant, taking with him his purchase money, for " the Lord had given it unto him, saying, Let thy price also be with thee, together with my grace, wheresoever thou goest."

So runs the story, and all who wish to obliterate the personal direction of Jesus in this sequence of events may do so, and still maintain the outline of the record. We may say that Thomas simply hired himself to a merchant for a certain sum of money, and class all references to the appearance of Jesus as merely indicative of the mental struggle and argument that went on in Thomas's own conscience before he made his final decision. But, on the other hand, if we desire to retain the supernatural aspect of the story, there are certain possibilities that we may pause over before we ruthlessly consign all such details to the realm of fable. It was not long after the Ascension. Our Lord had appeared in a strange form

to Mary in the garden, and to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus. They had seen men as angels who had given messages of guidance and comfort when the Master was caught up unto Heaven. Paul had seen a vision of the Saviour on the road to Damascus, which transformed his whole life. That a stranger should have appeared in the market-place, and should offer to provide Abbanes the merchant with a carpenter, at a moment when Thomas's own opposition rendered him incapable of making such a bargain for himself, is not an impossible phenomenon to those who were still living in an atmosphere permeated with a sense of their Master's living presence.

It is certain that consecration to the Divine purpose brings about the most amazing adjustment in human affairs. Many a man and woman has been forced into channels of service in ways which appear almost miraculous. It is, therefore, more than probable that the great work of the disciples and evangelists, in spreading the Gospel over the world for the centuries to come, was attended by unusual experiences on the part of the men thus divinely destined to do it. In the first place, they had returned to their nets by the lake-side. They were to be pushed by a force entirely outside of themselves into the uttermost parts of the earth. So we may follow Thomas in the picturesque sailing vessel as it tacks up and down the blue Mediterranean waters, passing in and out of the heavy cargo vessels of goods and treasures—all the busy, bustling world-

traffic that would throng the coast routes from seaport to seaport. We may think of him as a humble working craftsman, of infinitesimal importance, travelling among the teeming thousands of men, all intent on their own business and wealth, with his face set towards the vast provinces of an ancient autocratic civilization, appointed the task of telling their millions of a new order of living, with only a handful of silver in his purse, and a message within his soul: "My grace, wheresoever thou goest."

The task of early Christianity was at least no fable. Howsoever it was performed, the performance was miraculous, beyond the invention of the most fanciful compilers of romance.

Arrived within the dominions of Gundaphorus, which probably extended from the outskirts of Persia, through Afghanistan and parts of the north-west of India, Thomas was interviewed by the monarch. What could he do? what crafts did he know? Well, Thomas understood how to make ploughs, yokes, goads, pulleys, boats and oars, and masts. In stone he could build pillars, temples, and court-houses for kings. Could he then build the king a palace? Yes, Thomas was quite ready to undertake such a task. The king was charmed with the idea. He proceeded at once to take Thomas with him a little way out of the city, to a beautifully wooded spot where he wished to have a palace erected. The two paced over the site, surveying it from every aspect. There is something supremely natural about these circumstances. We can picture the swarthy

rajah, swathed and turbaned in brilliant silks, brushing through grass and foliage, with lithe, panther-like strides, conversing in easy, courteous terms about the plans, his dark eyes flashing sparks of keen personal interest, proud to feel that he was attracting to his mountain fastness something of the art of that hub of the universe, the shores of the Mediterranean. It was a fit occupation for a king to be building royal residences. Given the means, what hobby more fascinating to the noblemen of any age or country? Thomas won great approbation with his ideas—the doors to be turned to sun-rising, the windows opening to the westerly breezes, the bakehouse towards the south, and the water supply on the north side. He was evidently a craftsman who knew his work. The king entrusted him with a handsome sum of money to begin the building at once, and departed himself on a journey to another part of his kingdom. As the winter was approaching, he doubtless wished to spend it in the warmer plains. What happened during the snow and ice to the inhabitants on the hillsides he neither knew nor cared, philanthropy being a word not included in the Afghan vocabulary. But Thomas, left to himself, began to distribute the rajah's treasure to the poor and needy, and uttering this prayer: "I thank Thee, O Lord, in all things that Thou didst die for a little space that I might live forever in Thee, and that Thou hast sold me that by me Thou mightest set free many," and he continued to relieve distress, and to preach the Gospel far and wide to all who would listen, saying to the people:



“This hath the Lord dispensed unto you, and He giveth unto every man his food: for He is the nourisher of orphans, and steward of the widows, and unto all that are afflicted He is relief and rest.” And we may be sure that the village folk had never heard such words spoken, or glimpsed such a philosophy of life before, but ran together, open-eyed and open-mouthed, to receive the new tidings.

Meanwhile the king, having been told that the palace was completed all but the roof, had sent more money, for he took great delight in contemplating his charming new pleasure-house, and desired to see it finished. We may, therefore, imagine his feelings of disgust and rage on his return to be greeted with the tidings that Thomas had not built him a palace on the chosen site, that he had not performed a single one of his promises, but that he had spent the money in travelling from village to village, and from town to town, giving alms to the poor, and teaching of a new God. “Yes,” added the king’s indignant friends, “but in spite of this he seems to be a righteous man, for he only eats bread and salt himself, and drinks water, and only possesses one garment; and he heals all the sick people, and drives out devils, and does such amazing things that we feel that he must be a sorcerer.”

When Gundaphorus heard these things, he was so puzzled and shocked that, the record says, “he rubbed his face with his hands and shook his head for a long space.” We can guess his thoughts—a mixture of childish superstition and grave displeasure,

injured pride at being fooled, and a tentative fear of evil spirits. Out of this mood of surprised analysis the plain desire for justice emerged uppermost. He sent for Thomas and asked him with definite bluntness: "Hast thou built me a palace?" and the Apostle answered him "Yea." "When shall we go and see it?" continued Gundaphorus, no doubt vastly relieved in his mind. Then Thomas told him that, although the palace was indeed built, he could never see it in this life, because it was a building in the heavens, made of lives redeemed and health restored; made by binding broken hearts and relieving the oppressed and down-trodden; built of the freedom, the gratitude, the joy of his people; and that when he quitted this mortal life, he would see this palace with shining spires ready to receive and shelter him in the world to come.

Then the king's anger leapt forth in flames of fierce passion. To hear from the stranger's own lips that he had been tricked and deceived was more than he could bear. He caused his servants to seize upon Thomas, and to seize the merchant Abbanes, who had brought him to court in the first place, and to thrust them both into prison until he could devise a death for them of sufficient violence and cruelty. The king's brother, Gad, was also greatly incensed with Thomas, and allowed himself out of sympathy to be so filled with rage and fury that he fell dangerously ill, so ill indeed that he felt his last hour had come, and besought the king, as a solemn dying charge, to pour forth vengeance on the head of the wicked

sorcerer. "Have no fear," the king replied; "he shall be flayed alive!"

Now, according to the old legend, the soul of Gad, the king's brother, departed this life, and awaking in the world beyond was shown by the angels the palace built by the Apostle's good deeds; and utterly dumbfounded at the sight thereof, he besought the angels to restore him to earth that he might tell the king of its existence and entreat him to allow him to buy it. The angels granted this request, and the soul of Gad returned just as his corpse was being prepared for burial, and Gad told his brother all he had experienced, so that together they sent and released Thomas and the merchant from prison. But if we make due allowance for Oriental imagery and poetic licence, and pursue the story along the lines of what probably actually happened, we can see a situation arising out of Thomas's action dramatic enough to satisfy our keenest appetite for romance.

The brother's frantic wrath and resentment, his foaming with fury over the loss of family fortune, could easily cause desperate malady; but Thomas in prison would continue to pray for his royal persecutors, declaring Christ's ever-presence and the Divine power to cast out devils of selfish greed and wickedness.

We can accept the fact that Gad on his seeming deathbed received a wonderful conversion, that he became conscious of his grasping, idle, self-indulgent life, and desired to know something of a different life—a kinder, more thoughtful, more beneficial life; that forthwith, humbled and chastened, he called for

the king. Together they thought of the eternities, of their need of wisdom, virtue, and truth, in comparison of which earthly treasure fades away and becomes as naught. In this enlightened frame of mind, this awakened state of consciousness, they sent for Thomas, desiring to learn from him of those heavenly matters whose price "is far above rubies."

With ineffable joy Thomas received the tokens of their change of heart, and prayed this beautiful prayer with them :

"I praise thee, O Lord Jesu, that thou hast revealed thy truth in these men. . . . For men, by reason of the error that is in them, have overlooked thee, but thou hast not overlooked them. And now at my supplication and request do thou receive the King and his brother, and join them unto thy fold, cleansing them with thy washing and anointing them with thine oil from the error that encompasseth them : and keep them also from the wolves bearing them into thy meadows. And give them drink out of thine immortal fountain, which is neither fouled nor drieth up : for they entreat and supplicate thee, and desire to become thy servants and ministers, and for this they are content even to be persecuted of thine enemies, and for thy sake to be hated of them, and to be mocked and to die, like as thou for our sake didst suffer all these things, that thou mightest preserve us, thou that art Lord and verily the Good Shepherd. And do thou grant them to have confidence in thee alone ; and that they may be grounded in thy mysteries and receive the perfect good of thy graces and gifts, and flourish in thy ministry and come to perfection in thy Father."

After this wonderful experience the rajah and his brother Gad began themselves to complete their new palace in the heavens by themselves giving to the poor and needy, and comforting the distressed, and preaching these new tidings of a merciful Saviour; and after continuing in these good works for some time they declared that they were now prepared to be baptized into the company of faithful Christians. So the king's royal bath was closed for seven days that it might be sanctified, and at the end of the seven days they had a most solemn christening with many lamps lit, yet brighter than their own lamps appeared a sudden vision, a youth holding a lighted torch which caused all earthly light to wax dim.

Thomas invokes the Holy Spirit, "compassionate Mother . . . she that revealeth the hidden mysteries . . . mind, thought, reflection, consideration, reason," and asks that Spirit may communicate with the king and his brother and seal them in the name of the Father and Son and Holy Ghost. Then in the early dawn they partook of the Eucharist, and the good news spreading abroad, many others also believed and were glad.

In Syriac the Holy Ghost is always in the feminine gender, and that is why the term "Mother" is applied to Divinity. Mind, *réyānā*, one of the five Shekinas, dwellings, or manifestations of the "Father of Greatness," is part of the Manichæans' definitions of the ultimate "Source of Light," God.

It is somewhat curious that this legend of the building of a mental palace in good works should

have become associated with the name of Thomas, the one doubting disciple. It was to him that our Lord said : " Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed : blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed " (John xx. 29).

Possibly—nay, more *probably*—the very weakest part of Thomas's nature was transformed by the Saviour into the strongest. Has it not been the mighty experience of many Christians, that through prayer and study of the Scriptures they have overcome their worst faults of character, and have shown in later life qualities of a Christian nature which they entirely lacked before the " Dayspring from on high " visited them ? It is only part of that miraculous change which Christianity is daily bringing to human nature that we find Thomas looking in faith to a palace in the heavens, that we find him in the same state of consciousness as Browning describes in " Abt Vogler," when he exclaims :

" Therefore to whom turn I but to Thee, the ineffable Name ?  
Builder and maker, Thou, of houses not made with hands !  
What, have fear of change from Thee who art ever the same.  
Doubt that Thy power can fill the heart that Thy power expands ?  
There shall never be one lost good ! what was, shall live as before ;  
The evil is null, is nought, is silence implying sound ;  
What was good shall be good, with, for evil, so much good more ;  
On the earth the broken arcs ; in the heaven a perfect round."

And now we must leave the legends of Thomas, for there are a great many involved with strange stories of serpents and wild asses, and men and women, and kings, both strange and wild too. In all the curious admixture of Eastern romance and philosophy the

Missionary stands out an heroic, consistent character, possessed of marvellous power, and when he is finally martyred, departs in peace with this prayer on his lips :

“ Behold, Lord, I have accomplished thy work and perfected thy commandment. I have become a bondman ; therefore to-day do I receive freedom. Do thou, therefore, give me this and perfect me ; and this I say, not for that I doubt, but that they may hear for whom it is needful to hear.”

We must leave the legendary records, for we have glimpsed the truth, or rather the general impression of what truth there may be, at the source of these old Syriac manuscripts. They have nothing more to tell us of value, and we may swiftly hurry on through the ages, and pause at the researches of a certain gallant British chaplain, by name Buchanan, who, in the middle of the nineteenth century, travelled all over India, and collected the most interesting and valuable records of the early Christian Churches which claimed the Apostle Thomas as their first founder.

The Rev. W. H. Foy, who edits these researches, has made this note on the subject. He says :

“ The stoning of St. Stephen and the murder of James helped quickly to fill up the measure of the Jews’ iniquity ; and in all probability, when St. Paul set out on the apostolic journey which brought him to this island, St. Thomas left Aden for India. And if so, these Apostles no doubt had left Jerusalem to her fate, and turned from her to carry to Britain and to India the Gospel of Christ, and with it increased responsibility.

“About 1807, fifty years after the battle of Plassy and fifty years before the present mutiny, Dr. Claudius Buchanan, Vice-Provost of the College of Fort William in Calcutta, found at Cranganore an Archbishop presiding over forty-five churches. . . . The Syrian Church followed the pure teaching and apostolic customs of St. Thomas.”

The whole narrative is of so interesting a character that we will continue to quote from it. The book was published in 1858 and copies, these days, must be rare.

“The Syrian Christians inhabit the interior of Travancore and Malabar in the south of India, and have been settled there from the early ages of Christianity. The first notices of this ancient people in recent times are to be found in the Portuguese histories. When Vasco da Gama arrived at Cochin on the coast of Malabar, in the year 1503, he saw the sceptre of the Christian King, for the Syrian Christians had formerly regal power in Malay-ala. When the Portuguese arrived, they were agreeably surprised to find upwards of a hundred Christian churches on the coast of Malabar. But when they became acquainted with the purity and simplicity of their worship, they were offended. ‘These churches,’ said the Portuguese, ‘belong to the Pope.’ ‘Who is the Pope?’ said the natives; ‘we never heard of him.’ The European priests were yet more alarmed when they found that these Hindoo Christians maintained the order of discipline of a regular Church under episcopal jurisdiction, and that for one thousand three hundred years past they had enjoyed a succession of bishops appointed by the Patriarch of Antioch.



‘We,’ said they, ‘are of the true faith, whatever you from the West may be, for we come from the place where the followers of Christ were first called Christians.’ ”

The Portuguese then established the Inquisition at Goa, and burnt as many of the Syrian Christian books as they could find, while the churches away from the sea-coast hid their books and fled into the mountains, seeking the protection of the native princes, who had always been proud of their alliance. Here the churches remained in obscurity, their very existence held in doubt for some three hundred years, until, in 1896, Dr. Buchanan conceived the idea of visiting them in his tour through Hindustan; and thanks to the helping hand of the Marquis Wellesley, then Governor-General, he was able to carry out his plan. Can one imagine a more remarkable, a more thrilling journey? The route lay through scenery of the most romantic and gorgeous description. On all sides rose majestic mountain ranges, from whose heights beautiful streams poured down into deep valleys and preserving them in perpetual green. Woods stretched away filled with pepper, cardamoms and cassia, frankincense, and aromatic gums. Beyond lay the beautiful mountains of Travancore, covered with forests of gigantic teak. Imagine, in the midst of this paradise of nature, to hear the tinkling of a church bell, and suddenly to come upon a building with sloping roof, pointed arched windows, and walls supported by buttresses, an almost exact model of an English parish church!

Dr. Buchanan's Diary reads like a fairy tale :

"When we were approaching the church of Chinganoor," he writes, "we met one of the 'cassanars' or Syrian clergy. He was dressed in a white loose vestment, with a cap of red silk hanging down behind. Being informed who he was, I said to him in the Syriac language, 'Peace be unto you.' He was surprised at the salutation but immediately answered, 'The God of peace be with you.' He accosted the rajah's servants in the language of the country, to know who I was, and immediately returned to the village to announce our approach.

"As we talked with a senior priest we learnt that they were in a degenerate and impoverished state, compared with their forefathers. There were very few copies of the Syrian Scriptures; the vernacular language of the country was Malabar."

This splendid English chaplain cheerily offered to see if a translation could be prepared and distributed to them at a small price. At Mavelycar he had had a talk with a priest about the original language of the Four Gospels. "You concede," the Syrian had said, "that our Saviour spoke in our language. We know it from Syriac expressions in the Greek Gospels, 'Ephphatha,' 'Talitha cumi,' and so on."

In November 1896 Dr. Buchanan visited a church at Ranneil, which was perched on a rocky hill on the banks of the river, the most remote of all the churches in that quarter. He writes :

"The two 'Kasheeshas,' presbyters, here are Lucas and Mattai. . . . I have now visited eight

churches, and can scarcely believe that I am in the land of the Hindoos. . . . I attended Divine Service on the Sunday. Their liturgy is that which was formerly used in the churches of the Patriarch of Antioch. During the prayers there were intervals of silence, the priests praying in a low voice, and every man praying for himself. These silent intervals add much to the solemnity and appearance of devotion. . . .

“Instruction by preaching is little in use among them now. Many of the old men lamented the decay of piety and religious knowledge, and spoke with pleasure of the record of ancient times. . . . But they have a Bible and a Scriptural liturgy, and these will save a Church in the worst of times. . . .

“The doctrines of the Syrian Christians are few in number, but pure, and agree in essential points with those of the Church of England. So that, although the body of the Church appears to be ignorant, and formal, and dead, there are individuals who are alive to righteousness.”

Perhaps his visit to the church at Caude-nad was the most interesting of all, for at Caude-nad resided Mar Dionysius, the Metropolitan of the Syrian Church.

“I was much struck with his first appearance,” the chaplain writes. “He was dressed in a vestment of dark red silk ; a large golden cross hung from his neck and his venerable beard reached below his girdle. Such, thought I, was the appearance of Chrysostom in the fourth century. On public occasions he wears the Episcopal mitre ; a muslin robe is thrown over his under-garment, and in his hand he bears the

crozier or pastoral staff. . . . He is a man of highly respectable character in his Church, eminent for his piety and for the attention he devotes to his sacred functions. I found him to be far superior in general learning to any of his clergy whom I had yet seen. He told me that all my conversations with his priests since my arrival in the country had been communicated to him. 'You have come,' said he, 'to visit a declining Church, and I am now an old man; but the hopes of its seeing better days cheer my old age, though I may not live to see them.' I submitted to the Bishop my wishes in regard to the translation and printing of the Holy Scriptures. 'I have already fully considered the subject,' said he, 'and have determined to superintend the work myself and to call the most learned of my clergy to my aid. It is a work which will illuminate these dark regions and God will give it His blessing.' I was much pleased when I heard this pious resolution of the venerable man, for I had now ascertained that there are upwards of 200,000 Christians in the South of India, besides the Syrians, who speak the Malabar language. . . . He descanted with great satisfaction on the hope of seeing printed Syriac Bibles from England, and said they would be 'a treasure to his Church.' "

Dr. Buchanan's Diary leaves us in the dark as to whether this work of translation was ever accomplished, but it is of the greatest possible interest to learn in the present day from the British and Foreign Bible Society that an edition of the Scriptures in Syriac was indeed issued. The first publication was that of the Gospels and Acts in 1815, edited by the

traveller himself, and the New Testament followed in 1816, edited by S. Lee, and the Old Testament in 1823.<sup>1</sup> This gift was not altogether a one-sided one, for Dr. Buchanan's new-found friends of the ancient Malabar Churches had presented him with several ancient Bible and other MSS., now carefully preserved in the University Library, Cambridge, England.

Such events are but one more sign of the unique heritage and mission of the English-speaking peoples, namely, to carry the written Word of God to the uttermost parts of the earth. A special example may be found in the heroic labours of Miss Mary Mozcley, who gave her life in the Inland Mission to Africa. She had actually to create a written language in order to give a certain tribe the "Good Tidings." They had no literature at all, no power to write their speech. She would rock a child in her arms and fondle it, in order to arrive at a word for love, and having heard it, she had to invent the letters for it according to the sound, and in this way by slow degrees she wrote down in dialect the Gospel of St. Mark, and then, falling a prey to fever, she died, but assuredly her splendid work lives to bear fruit.

Cranganore is that celebrated place of Christian

<sup>1</sup> This Testament was by no means the first English gift to the "Christians of St. Thomas," for during the siege of London by the Danes, no less an interesting personage than King Alfred the Great vowed he would send gifts to Rome, and also to St. Thomas and St. Bartholomew of India, if the Danes were driven back; and the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle relates how in 883 Alfred kept his vow, and sent Bishop Sighelm of Shireburn with his offering to Malabar.

antiquity where the Apostle Thomas is said to have landed when he first arrived in India from Aden in Arabia. Once there was a fort there, the Portuguese having had the idea at one time of making it the centre of their Indian trade; but both town and fort are in ruins now. There still remains, however, the seat of the Archbishop, and subject to him are forty-three churches. Not far distant from Cranganore is Paroor, where there is an ancient Syrian Church which bears the name of the Apostle Thomas.

The prayers used in these Churches are of the most remote antiquity. This early Liturgy of Malabar is remarkable for the many references to the healing of the sick and the protection of travellers. The first freshness of the Gospel breathes through such passages of intercession as these :

“Also for this province and city, and for them that dwell therein, especially for this congregation : let us pray that the Lord by His grace may turn away from us sword, captivity, rapine, earthquake, famine, pestilence, and other things which are injurious to the soul and the body. . . .

“Let us pray also for the sick : and especially for them who are vexed with cruel diseases and are tried by most evil spirits : we pray that the Lord our God may send to them His holy Angel of Love and Salvation, and may visit and heal and help them through the greatness of His grace and mercy.

“Also for the poor, orphans, widows, and afflicted, and them that suffer persecution : let us pray that the Lord may govern them by His grace and nourish and console them by His pity, and by His loving-

kindness set them free from them that do violence to them."

In another part, after praying for "the peace and unity and well-being of the whole world and of all Churches," the Deacon breaks out into a laudation that is half prayer, half praise, a spontaneous, joyous acknowledgment of the goodness and bountiful provision of God :

"For the healthfulness of the air, the richness of the year and its provisions, and the beauty of the whole world :

"For our holy Fathers, our Patriarch, the universal Pastor of the whole Catholic Church, and our Bishop, that they may enjoy good health.

"The merciful God Who governeth all things by His love :

"Him that is rich in mercy and Whose loving-kindness is shed abroad :

"Him that is good in His essence, and the Giver of all gifts :

"Him that is glorious in heaven and exceeding laudable upon earth.

"The Immortal Nature that inhabits that most glorious light, we beseech :

"Save us all, O Christ ! our Lord and God, by Thy grace, and multiply in us peace and love, and have mercy upon us."

Then the Priest and the Deacon pray alternately.

*Priest* : "Be there a commemoration upon the holy Altar of the Virgin Mary, the *Mother of Christ* [note, not the Mother of God]. Let all the people

say Amen and Amen. Be Thy Commemoration, Apostle Thomas our holy father, upon the holy Altar, together with the just who have conquered and the martyrs who have received the crown."

*Deacon* : "The mighty God is with us, our Father is with us, our Angel, and our Helper, the God of Jacob."

*Priest* : "The little ones, with the Elders, behold all the faithful who have fallen on sleep in a good hope, who have paid the debt of humanity. By Thy exceeding glorious resurrection, Thou shalt raise them up to Thy glory."

Part of the concluding prayers run thus :

"The Lord that sitteth in heaven give us a quiet peace, a good and sweet peace, that we may rejoice day and night.

"May He give you peaceful times that we may ever rejoice, and not be turbulent and unquiet, but loving each other through charity. . . .

"And those who are strangers among us, and are far off from their homes, may the King of Ages cause them to return in peace.

"Let this feast be holy upon you, O humble people, and may the Lord be your establisher and counsellor to good things.

"Now and ever and at all times and occasions, by nights also and days, and even to ages of ages." <sup>1</sup>

It is wonderful to think of this cluster of ancient Churches, preserved in simple piety, clinging in child-like trust to the truths of primeval Christianity—

<sup>1</sup> *Liturgy of the Church of Malabar*, translated by the Rev. J. M. Neale, D.D., and the Rev. R. F. Littledale, LL.D.



kindness to the orphan, the sick, and the stranger—hidden in the clefts of the rocks, the winding ghauts, the spice-laden valleys, the great teak woods of India. Truly, “the world forgets, but the wise angels know.”



**CHAPTER VI**  
**MARK THE E'ANGELIST AND THE**  
**CHURCH IN EGYPT**



## CHAPTER VI

### MARK THE EVANGELIST AND THE CHURCH IN EGYPT

**A**CCORDING to a constant and unvarying tradition, Mark the Evangelist founded the Church of Alexandria.

We may dismiss the heated controversy among critics as to there being two Marks—the date of the martyrdom of Mark in Egypt being fixed both by Eusebius and Jerome in the eighth year of Nero's reign (*i.e.* A.D. 68–9), which leaves ample time for him to have been summoned by Paul to Rome in A.D. 65 (2 Tim. iv. 11); and we may accept the tradition of the Egyptian Church that he was the John Mark mentioned in the twelfth chapter of the Acts, to whose house Peter turned his steps after the miraculous release from prison. This being the case, John Mark was the son of Aristobulus, whose brother was Barnabas the Levite, a native of Cyprus. The family had been rich, but an expedition of the Nubians having reduced it to poverty, they all migrated to Palestine and settled in one of the villages near to Jerusalem. It is believed that Peter's wife was the daughter of Aristobulus, so that while Mark is described in the fourth chapter of Colossians

as "sister's son to Barnabas," he was also brother-in-law to Peter. But that he was a much younger man than Peter is evidenced by the Apostle calling him "Marcus, my son," when he includes him in the closing salutation written from the Church at Babylon. John Mark then, a dearly loved kinsman, is needed by both Apostle and evangelist. It will be remembered that Paul and Barnabas had a sharp difference of opinion as to whether he should accompany them on their missionary journey, and the controversy ended in Barnabas and Mark proceeding to Cyprus alone. Mark must have joined Peter at the Colony in Babylonia after his sojourn in Cyprus, and from thence have travelled with Peter to Rome, where he acted as his interpreter. Eusebius writes of this period :

"The lustre of piety so enlightened the minds of Peter's hearers at Rome that they were not content with the bare hearing and unwritten instruction of his divine preaching, but they earnestly requested St. Mark, whose Gospel we have, being an attendant upon St. Peter, to leave with them a written account of the instructions which had been delivered to him by word of mouth, nor did they desist until they had prevailed upon him. And thus they were the cause of the writing of that Gospel which is called, 'According to St. Mark.' And they say that the Apostle Peter, being informed of what was done by the revelation of the Holy Ghost, was pleased with the zeal of the men, and authorized the writing to be introduced into the Churches."

Jerome also says that St. Mark wrote a short

Gospel from what he had heard from St. Peter, at the request of the brethren at Rome, which, when Peter knew, he approved and published it in the Church, commanding the reading of it by his own authority.

Brief as these references to Mark may be, they somehow contrive to bring to the imagination a personality of singular beauty and arresting charm. Consider his circumstances. His family had been rich and cultivated, Levites, the tribe specially given to learning and the pursuit of mental enjoyments, living within reach of all the treasures of Greek philosophy and art. Then fortune suddenly changed. They became poor, having to turn their knowledge to practical account and to rub shoulders with the humble and the toiling. In their new estate the daughter of the house is not ashamed to ally herself with a simple fisherman's family of Galilee, a family of some position and means (note that Mark refers in the first chapter of his Gospel to Zebedee's "hired servants"), but still people who were rough and untutored, compared with their original circle of acquaintance. This marriage throws a fresh light upon Peter's individuality, and reveals the fact that he must have had an instinctive love of refinement and grace, and must have early shown a nobility of nature, at least in some degree, to attract a maiden whose antecedents were measurably above his own. Mark, the brother, evidently had the instinct of the scribe and man of letters from boyhood. Knowing how impulsive and ardent Peter was in his emotions

and affections, we can guess at his love and admiration for this cultured, thoughtful, distinguished young kinsman. We can see all these varied qualities of character melting and blending under the alchemy of Christianity, and the unfolding in Mark of a heavenly obedience and consistency, a practical democracy, poised in the bequeathments of a poetic past and established on the foundation of a passionate present, a life of movement and peril, but overshadowed with the protecting calm of Omnipotent Truth.

If, as tradition has it, he was sent by Peter to plant the Gospel in Egypt, it again suggests that his scholarship rendered him particularly suitable to approach such a highly intellectual nation; and even so we can scarcely think of that land of opulence and treasure, of mammoth temples and giant idols, and of all its pomp and pride and serpentine sensuality, and not feel aghast at the temerity of Mark's mission. To be sure, there had been other Christians there before him. We read that there were dwellers "in Egypt and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene" who were present at Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost, and who were converted by Peter. The eunuch of Candace must have passed through Egypt on his return journey. Simon, who bore the cross, was a native of Cyrene. By tradition Simon Zelotes is said to have been the first to preach the Gospel in Egypt, but to Mark belongs the honour of establishing an organized community of Christians. If the primary steps towards this



event took place in Alexandria about A.D. 44, St. Mark's visit must have been made before his journey to Cyprus with Barnabas. His first convert was one Annianus or Hananias, a shoemaker by trade, for whom Mark wrought a miracle—no doubt some healing of disease—so, that Annianus gladly received the evangelist into his house.

One cannot help observing that apparently from time immemorial there has ever been a quaint affiance between cobbling and philosophy. Shakespeare makes one of the populace awaiting Cæsar's triumphal entry into Rome answer the Tribune's fiery question, "What trade are you?" with the trite reply, "A trade, sir, that I hope I may use with a safe conscience; which is, indeed, sir, a mender of bad soles."

From being a cobbler of soles, Egyptian Annianus became a saviour of souls, in the most religious sense. Mark ordained him the first Bishop of the new community, with ten helpers in the work, and he himself travelled farther afield, preaching Christ in Lybia, Marmarica, Pentapolis, and neighbouring countries.

The symbol of the lion is always associated with St. Mark, probably because he is supposed to have put a lion to flight in the vicinity of Jordan. One is struck by the frequency with which the lion figures in ancient writers. *Æsop's Fables* contain many references to them. Greek, Roman, and apocryphal writings abound in them, which all makes us realize how wild and dangerous was the land, how tangled

and uncultivated between city and city, and how perilous were all forms of travel in those early Christian centuries. Mark's ceaseless journeyings to and fro over sea, and marsh, and desert makes the winged lion (such as graces in bold beauty one of the granite columns on the Piazzetta of St. Mark, in Venice) a fitting emblem of his courage and inspired activity.

During his second visit to Alexandria, the first Christian Church was built near to the seashore, at a place called Boucalis. Here Mark rested from his travels, and is believed to have preached and laboured many years. It is just possible that he may have departed from this life in peace, since Eusebius does not mention his martyrdom, and Jerome actually contradicts it; but the Egyptian tradition is that at the feast of Alexandria's idol, Serapis, on the 25th of April, he was dragged round the city and suffered a cruel death; but whether this fate actually befell St. Mark or another of the first Christian teachers in the city we cannot truthfully ascertain. The Church naturally centred all traditions on its most prominent saints, and it seemed hardly fitting that a lesser disciple should receive greater honours as a martyr than the blessed founders of the faith. But as we yearningly gaze back into the misty past, we may surely have some justification for believing that the clearer understanding of truth which those first missionaries possessed saved them from physical violence and destruction to a greater extent than the world has been willing to chronicle. All that we rightly know about Egyptian Christianity is that

through preaching and prayer, persistence and sacrifice, a little Church was established in that stronghold of ancient art and material learning, and, despite many direful persecutions, finally produced a few Christian teachers who have shone as luminaries of blessing and hope to humanity through the ages.

The Church of Alexandria rose to much eminence as time went on, and it possessed a most valuable heritage to Christendom in its specially democratic constitution.

Eutychius describes it in the following words :

“ St. Mark, along with Ananias, ordained twelve Presbyters to remain with the Patriarch, so that when the chair should become vacant, they might elect one out of the twelve, on whose head the other eleven should lay their hands, giving him benediction and constitute him Patriarch, and should after this choose some other man to supply the place of the promoted Presbyters, in such sort that the Presbytery should always consist of twelve.”

This statement is confirmed by Jerome in an epistle to Evagrius, thus :

“ At Alexandria, from the time of St. Mark the Evangelist to that of the Bishops Heraclas and Dionysius (that is, till the middle of the third century), it was the custom of the Presbyters to nominate one elected from among themselves to the higher dignity of the Bishoprick.”

It seems vain for Anglican writers, such as the late Dr. Neale, to endeavour to prove that these twelve presbyters constituted an Episcopal College, and that

the name presbyter was synonymous with bishop in the Early Church. The fact that St. Paul refers to the presbyters of Ephesus and their flock as being those "over which the Holy Ghost had made them bishops," only shows that a bishop in early days was an elder or teacher, and that what is known to-day as Apostolic Succession by the laying on of hands was a modern invention after the Council of Nicæa. The Presbyterate of Alexandria addressed letters to the Provinces in its name jointly with the Patriarch, and really more resembled a Board of Directors, with a Chairman or President, than any other known form of organization.

It appears that this Church by the seashore was free from violent persecution for nearly two hundred years, with the exception of risings of the Jews in Trajan's time, and that on the whole it was able to expand and consolidate; and the first Christian College or Catechetical School was the rich fruitage of its faithful work, emerging from obscurity about 190 A.D.

Little is known of the Church up to that period beyond the names of its Patriarchs. Of the good cobbler-Bishop Eusebius writes: "He was a man beloved of God and admirable in all things." He governed twenty-two years, and after him came Abilius, Cerdo, Primus, Justus, Cumenius, Marcian, Celadion, Agrippinus, Julian XI., who was Patriarch in A.D. 179, which brings us down to Demetrius, A.D. 189, a bigoted, jealous prelate, the persecutor of his Presbyter Origen, whom the world to-day

recognizes as one of the greatest if not *the* greatest of theological teachers since the Apostles themselves.

Demetrius was succeeded by Heracles, who was fifteen years in office; and then came Dionysius, A.D. 247. His memory is pleasant to dwell upon. So luminous is the page of history devoted to his life-work that it may well make refreshing reading for us for a few brief moments. He was a worthy inheritor of the Gospel of St. Mark, a kinsman in spirit, even though he appeared on the scene two hundred years later.

Dionysius, in addition to having a natural aptitude for scholarship, was a pupil of the wise and saintly Origen. He was thus able to make an immediate appeal to intellectual and cultivated men, and to convert many. In early years he married, and it is believed enjoyed a family life with his children. It seemed hard indeed that so studious and peaceable a character should have had to take office during a time of furious persecution of the Christian Faith. During the terrible ravages of Decian, the Prefect dispatched police in search of him. Dionysius had remained quietly in his own house, and the soldiers making sure that he would have fled for safety elsewhere, searched for him fruitlessly outside. On the fifth day he had a spiritual intuition that it would be best to fly. He accordingly went out, and at sunset fell into the hands of his persecutors. A certain priest named Timothy, supposed to be one of his own sons, hearing of the Bishop's capture, went along the road leading to Taposiris, filled with anxiety

and grief, and as he went he fell in with a man on his way to a wedding feast, which, according to prevailing customs, lasted all night. This man told the story to the wedding guests, and the whole party rushed out in a body and attacked the house where Dionysius was confined. The guard fled, and the Bishop, whom it must be confessed was more anxious to die than to live, finally chose two of his followers, Peter and Caius, and with them escaped into the desert until the storm should have spent itself.

When the hurricane of antagonism had subsided physically, it raged mentally. Sects, founded on personal interpretations of passages of the Scripture, arose one after the other, and in these matters Dionysius showed himself a most patient and impartial adjudicator. On one occasion he sat for three days continuously, from morning till evening, receiving and replying to objections, giving all arguments their due consideration, and modifying his own opinions; meeting the rebellious with courtesy and intelligent forbearance, with the result that the schism was ended, and the opposing party declared themselves wholly satisfied. The crux of this particular difficulty being an explanation of the Apocalypse—and, indeed, whether the Apocalypse could be considered as authentic—Dionysius' attitude towards the controversy was typical of his broad-minded humility and wisdom in all matters of Church doctrine.

“I should not venture to reject it,” he said, “when so many of our brethren highly esteem it.

I believe that it is above the capacity of my intellect, and consider that it contains a certain hidden and marvellous explanation of all things that it sets forth. For though I understand it not, yet I suspect that there lies in it a sense deeper than words; I measure it not, and judge it not by my own reason, but allowing faith more room, am of opinion that its contents are too lofty for my comprehension. I condemn not that which I cannot understand; I rather admire it the more because I cannot fathom it."

He was equally moderate in the controversy agitating all Churches on the question of the re-baptism of converts who had fallen away from the faith—a controversy which the persecution under the Emperor Valerian, A.D. 257, swept away for the time being. Dionysius was again banished to the wilds of the Libyan desert, but this proved but an occasion for spreading the good news of Christ. Soon there was a new and flourishing desert church at Kefro. The authorities, much incensed, ordered Dionysius to remove to Coluthion, a city situated in a district infested by robbers, and inhabited by a wild race of people. This event was again made an occasion of missionary enterprise and had at least one advantage, that it was not so far from Alexandria.

From the new retreat Dionysius proceeded to refute the heresy of Sabellius, but the subject being a complicated one to express adequately in human terms (the nature of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost), he had but made a statement on one half of the question when he raised a storm of misunderstand-

ing against himself, and was himself accused of heresy. The occasion drew from him one of his finest writings, his great *Apology*, in which this beautiful illustration of the relationship of the Father and Son occurs :

“As the heart indites a good word, the thought and word yet remaining entirely distinct and unfused, the one dwelling in the heart, the other on the lips, while yet one does not exist without the other, but the thought engenders the word, and the word exhibits the thought, and the thought is an implicit word, and the word an explicit thought, and the thought is the father of the word, and the word the child of the thought, existing with it, existing from it ; even so that great Father and Universal Mind hath before all things His Son, as His Word, Interpreter, and Angel.”

This *Apology* was considered satisfactory, and the Bishop of Alexandria retained his reputation as the first living Doctor of the Church.

It was Hans Andersen who, within our modern ken, likened this mortal life to the microbes in “a drop of ditch-water,” all fighting, scrambling, and tearing one another to pieces. As we look through the microscope of history, the phantasmagoria seems to go on in like manner, a queer dream, a nightmare of ceaseless fightings, torturings, and devourings. It is of a passing, cold interest to us to note that the Emperor Valerian, who had started such persecutions against the Christians (none so averse, as we have seen, from persecuting each other), fell a victim to Sapor, King of Persia, and was himself treated as he had



treated others, and cruelly put to death. After this event, Alexandria fell to Valerian's son, Gallienus. Times were quieter, and Dionysius, about 261, was able to return to the city. But soon Alexandria was again in the most hideous turmoil, divided between the adherents of Æmilian the Prefect, who had assumed the purple, and the young Roman Emperor. Famine and plague were rife.

"It is easier," writes Dionysius, in a paschal letter to Hicrax, an Egyptian bishop, "to travel from East to West, than from one part of Alexandria to another. The heart of the city is wilder and more pathless than the vast desert through which Israel journeyed."

The air was full of dense mists and vapours. It was just the hell of mortal mind. At last the Emperor's soldiers triumphed, but the city was still in an indescribable state, and Dionysius, holy saint as he was in mind and soul, writes that—

"As in times past persecution and tyranny could not prevent them from celebrating the festivals of the Church, so that the desert, the ship, and the prison became the House of God (though none were so blessed as the martyrs who were banqueting in the kingdom of heaven); so now, in the midst of sickness and death, they might share in the same holy joy. The Christians ministered to the sick and dying, often at the expense of their own lives. The pagans, on the contrary, endeavoured to avoid death at the sacrifice of every tie of domestic love: they would not visit the sick, they would not bury the dead,

and yet they were unable after all to preserve themselves."

Dionysius, while the first Council of Antioch was in deliberation over the enormities of Paul of Samosata, fell asleep, A.D. 265 :

"Asleep to violence, but awake to love!"

He left Alexandria comparatively free of plague, and at rest, and he left the reputation of peerless learning, unshaken faith, and a character that had well earned him the title of Dionysius *the Great*.

If it were not for lives like these, Christianity would not have reached down to us through the struggling, pandemoniac centuries. We know very little of the early founders, but a Gospel which, two hundred years later, can raise up a Dionysius to live a self-sacrificing, untarnished life, toned with a simple, sweet gravity, an unearthly, patient courtesy, and a keen, perfectly poised intellect, in the midst of seething, ceaseless turmoil and fury, stamps its origin to be wholly Divine, and is the most adequate irrefutable witness to the goodness of the first Evangel.

This prayer from the Liturgy known as St. Mark's expresses the spirit in which true Christians lived and hoped and worked :

"Them that are sick, O Lord, of Thy people, visit in Thy pity and mercies and heal.

"Avert from them and from us all sickness and infirmity, drive away from them the spirit of weakness : raise up again them that are lying in long

sickness ; heal them that are vexed of unclean spirits, them that are in prisons, or in mines, or in courts of justice, or with sentence given against them, or in bitter slavery, or tribute, have mercy on all, free all: for Thou art our God, He that sets free the bound, He that raises those that are in misery, the hope of the hopeless, the succour of the defenceless, the resurrection of the fallen, the harbour of the tempest-tossed, the avenger of the afflicted. To every Christian soul that is in trouble, and that is a petitioner to Thee, give mercy, give remission, give refreshment. Furthermore, O Lord, heal the diseases of our souls, cure our bodily weaknesses, O Physician of souls and bodies. Overseer of all flesh, oversee and heal us by Thy salvation.

“ To our brethren that have departed from us, or are about to depart, in whatever place, give a fair journey, whether by land or rivers, or lakes or highways, or in whatever way they may be travelling, restore them all everywhere to a tranquil harbour, to a safe harbour: vouchsafe to be their fellow-voyager and fellow-traveller. Give them back to their friends, rejoicing to the rejoicing, healthful to the healthful. And preserve, O Lord, to the end, our sojourning also in this life without harm, and without storm.”

The Alexandrian Church was not able to retain the purity and sweetness possessed by her under the wise and gracious government of Dionysius. In the following century, under the episcopacies of Achillas, Alexander, and Athanasius, she was rent by the Arian controversy, and by A.D. 444, Diocorus supported a new heresy known by the name of Mono-

physitism, a doctrine which regarded the human Jesus and the Divine Christ as so fused in one nature as to become virtually anthropomorphic in character. This view-point being rejected by the Council of Chalcedon, A.D. 451, the Egyptian Church separated from the other Churches of Christendom, and has ever since occupied a more or less isolated position ; Monophysitism splitting up into several sects, and spreading into Asia Minor. Since the British occupation of Egypt, it has emerged somewhat from obscurity. Its members now mix freely with Moslems and Greeks, and its churches and monasteries have increased till they number about 450. In 1720, the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge sent out a large supply of Syriac Testaments into Egypt, which were thankfully received by the Church. It is said that George I. gave as much as five hundred pounds for this purpose.

A Coptic Church is generally distinguished by three altars, roofed by three domes. Both the veneration of the Sacrament and the Crucifix are alike forbidden. The Head of the Church is the Patriarch of Alexandria. There are ten bishops in Egypt, one at Khartoum, and three in Abyssinia.

The term "Copts" denotes the native Christians of Egypt ; they probably took their name from the town of Coptos (modern Kuft), an important terminus on the Nile, about twenty-six miles below Luxor. In 1907 they numbered about 706,322, and they have preserved the ancient Egyptian type of feature, while assimilating the Moslem dress and social

customs, such as removing their shoes at worship, etc. Only their priests now wear the black turban, which in old days their conquerors made obligatory for all.

Under the Roman domination, the ancient Egyptian language passed into Coptic, and it was written in a curious hybrid alphabet of beautiful Greek uncials and demotic characters. It was through these Early Christian texts that Jean François Champollion in 1824 was able to read Egyptian hieroglyphs, and the Coptic writing is once more becoming popular in schools to-day, under the modern term "script."

It is supremely interesting to find that the Church, founded by one who was essentially the Scribe of the Apostles, should remain famous for its exquisite manuscripts, and that the spiritual descendants of the hard-working cobbler should have continued to excel in all manner of handicrafts. Indeed, the Copts, with their past traditions of art, developed thousands of years B.C., wedded to religious enthusiasm, their minds set at liberty, and inspired with the new progressive ideals of Christianity, have made the most valuable contribution to art in every form. The design of St. George and the Dragon, probably developed first in Egypt, and the Madonna and Holy Child possibly also found its first portrayal in the cities of the Nile. A pure and fervent Christianity immediately finds expression in increased intellectual activity and prowess. It at once produces the craftsman, the man of letters, the poet, the artist, the architect. The history of Geneva—

artistic, literary, educational—is a typical illustration of the invariable effect on human society of a clearer and truer perception of the laws of God and the compassionate Christ ; and it is therefore not surprising that in spite of wars and numerous political upheavals, the Copts should have retained a self-supporting, educated position as scribes, traders, and skilled artisans. Under Oriental influence they developed a distinctive school in glass, lustre-ware, lamps, ivory carving, and tombstones. They undoubtedly influenced the art of early Ireland.

Creeds perish in their own confusion, Churches disintegrate through the clash of human wills, and materialism returns to wallow in its own mire ; but it is cheering to learn that, out of chaos and crime, there still emerges a slender line of constructive activity, a gleam in the grace of some old archway, in the rounded curve of household pot or cup, in the purple thread of some ancient piece of woven linen, that silently bears witness to the beauty and the permanence of Christian thinking.

CHAPTER VII  
,  
THE LEGEND OF THADDEUS AND ABGAR,  
KING OF EDESSA





## CHAPTER VII

### THE LEGEND OF THADDEUS AND ABGAR, KING OF EDESSA

EDESSA, the modern Urfa, was the parent Christian Church of Mesopotamia. Situated on the Diasun, a left-hand tributary of the Euphrates, between the Greek and the Oriental world, communicating partly with Antioch and partly with Persia, with Greater Armenia, and even with India, she was in a strong position to benefit at once from Greek culture and the forceful originality of barbaric countries. The legend of her receptivity to Christianity in the first century is one of the most fascinating, most tantalizing stories ever secreted by old Syriac manuscripts.

The average historian takes the least questionable line of judgment, and pronounces the story to be "absurd and wholly fictitious." The scholars differ from one another with exciting bewilderment, and it must be confessed that when all known evidence is considered, the fabulous nature of the events chronicled are by no means so satisfactorily proved. The story seems to grow more possible, more real, and more reasonable the further it hides in the remoteness of the past, and whether under the name

of one scribe or another, to carry with it a queer—if one may justifiably use the adjective—ring of truth.

The legend is that Abgar, surnamed the Dark or the Black, King of Edessa at the time of our Lord's ministry, had sent princes on a diplomatic embassy to Sabinus, the Roman Proconsul of Syria, wishing to assure himself of the Emperor's protection and goodwill. Sabinus had replied that so long as Abgar paid the tribute-money required of him, he need have no fear; friendly relations would continue. While in Syria, this Embassy, and particularly his confidential courier, Anan, brought back news of the wonderful cures wrought by one Jesus in Jerusalem.

The account of these healings appealed with a strange, vivid interest to Abgar, for he himself was suffering from an incurable disease and sighed for relief. He resolved forthwith to write a letter to Jesus, the Saviour and Benefactor of men, and ask Him to come and visit Him.

An account of this correspondence is set forth at some length by an Armenian historian, Moses of Khoren, who lived not earlier than A.D. 460—not later than A.D. 925. Tixeront supports the former date, Carrière (his translator) the latter one.

According to Moses, this is the letter which the King of Edessa wrote :

“ Abgar Arschama, Prince of the Country, to Jesus, Saviour and Benefactor, who hast appeared in the province of Jerusalem. Greeting.

“ I have heard tell of thee and of the cures which thou workest, without using remedies or

herbs. For, from what one hears, thou makest the blind to see and the lame to walk ; thou dost cleanse the lepers and cast out unclean spirits ; thou dost cure those afflicted with chronic ills, and even thou dost raise the dead. When I heard all this of thee, I said to myself, it must mean one of two things : either thou art a God descended from heaven to work these miracles, or else thou art the Son of God, thou who achievest such wonders. This is the occasion of my writing. I implore thee to take the trouble to visit me, and to cure me of the disease from which I suffer. I have also heard that the Jews murmur against thee and wish thee harm. Now I possess a city, small but beautiful, and that will be sufficient for us both."

And indeed Abgar could certainly speak with modest pride of his capital, with its fine walls, and gardens of melons and mulberries, and an ancient tower ascribed by tradition to Nimrod—as pleasant a retreat as any Eastern prophet could wish for.

Moses, our historian, then explains that when Anan, the courier, arrived with this letter in Jerusalem, he did not dare to present it to Jesus in person, but he spoke instead to Philip and Andrew, and they told the matter to Jesus. Moses then makes the mistake of causing Thomas to write a letter in reply, whereas the message from Jesus would have been a verbal one, written down by the courier, or some scribe perhaps, to preserve the wording intact. This is how the answer read :

"Happy is he who believeth on me without having seen me, for it is written of me, 'He that

seeth me will not believe on me, and he that seeth me not, will believe and live.' As to the matter of which thou hast written, asking me to come unto thee, I must first fulfil here all those things for which I have been sent. When these are fulfilled I ascend unto him that hath sent me, and when I have ascended I will send one of my disciples, who shall cure thee of thy ills, and will give life to thee and to those that are with thee." The Syriac version contains also this conclusion: "May thy city be blessed, and may no enemy ever bear rule over her."

The legend then continues to affirm that after the Ascension Thomas sent Thaddeus, one of the Seventy,<sup>1</sup> to Edessa, and that Abgar received him with joy, and Thaddeus healed the king of his disease, and also healed every one in the city of their various infirmities, and a great many believed on Christ. Abgar declared that, for his part, he had always believed in Jesus, and that he would have gone with his army to exterminate the Jews who crucified Him, but that he feared the power of the Roman Emperor.

The question of supreme interest now is, where did Moses get his information? He himself quotes

<sup>1</sup> It is just possible that this Thaddeus may actually have been the Judas Thaddeus or Lebbeus, one of the twelve Apostles, brother to James in Jerusalem, and therefore brother to our Lord. His life seems to have been prolonged, and there is a feeling that he may have preached in Arabia, Syria, Mesopotamia, and Persia. Nicephorus says that he came to Edessa, so that the two Thaddeuses may have been one and the same person. It is interesting to know that his grandchildren were living in the reign of Domitian, and thought to be dangerous on account of their affinity with the Royal House of David, until it was proved to the Emperor that they were poor men, toiling for their living, at work on their thirty acres of land, which was their only source of income.

Julius Africanus, who in turn affirms that the facts were stored up in the archives of Edessa, and that he has seen the very manuscripts. This decidedly roundabout testimony might not be of great value were it not that Eusebius the historian, so generally accepted as accurate and reliable, also testifies to having seen these manuscripts from the archives of Edessa.

Moses also is curiously accurate on another point in the story. He makes Abgar reign thirty-eight years. Now, according to the *Chronicles of Denys de Telmahre*, and the works of Gutschmid, and of R. Duval, Abgar the Black reigned first of all ten years from 4 B.C. to A.D. 7. He was then dethroned by Maanon v., A.D. 7-13, but afterwards re-ascended the throne for a fresh period of thirty-seven years and a month, A.D. 13-50, and it puzzles critics to know how Moses, if he invented the whole circumstance, obtained this special information.

But our good Moses was certainly something of a novelist—an historical novelist, no doubt, the Sir Walter Scott of his generation—and he did not scruple to take facts and traditions, and use his own sense in weaving them into readable form. In this instance he has further set down a correspondence between Abgar and the Emperor Tiberius, and also with the Persian Emperor. The former he probably took from fragments found in the *Second Book of Eusebius*. It makes excellent reading, for at least it presents, if nothing more, the times of Jesus as they were reconstructed by an intelligent imagination,

based on odd facts and data not so very far distant in the march of the centuries.

*Letter of Abgar to the Emperor Tiberius.*

“Abgar, King of Armenia, to my Lord Tiberius, Emperor of the Romans. Greeting.

“I know that nothing remains hidden from your Majesty, but as thy friend, I can acquaint you better [with events] by means of a letter.

“The Jews living in the provinces of Palestine have plotted together and have crucified the Christ, without his having committed a single crime, and in spite of his having loaded them with good deeds, signs, and wonders, even to the point of raising the dead. Mark well, these miracles are not wrought by an ordinary man, but by a God. And indeed at the time when they crucified him, the sun was darkened, and the earth trembled and opened. Jesus himself at the end of three days rose from the dead and showed himself to many. And to-day his name invoked by his disciples works the greatest miracles everywhere. That which has happened to me is a manifest proof. Your Majesty knows what is right to order shall be done against the Jewish people who have committed such a crime, and if it is right to proclaim throughout the whole world the command to adore Christ as the true God. Fare thee well.”

*The Reply.*

“Tiberius, Emperor of the Romans, to Abgar, King of Armenia. Greeting.

“The letter dictated by thy friendship has been read before me, and I extend my thanks.

“We had already heard of the facts of the case from several sources. Pilate, on his side, has exactly informed us of the miracles wrought by Jesus, and that after his resurrection many people believed that he was a God. I myself wished to take the action which has occurred to you. But as it is the custom amongst the Romans not to admit a God upon the command of the Sovereign alone, until the Senate has examined and considered the matter, I proposed it to the Senate, who rejected the suggestion with scorn, chiefly because it had not first examined it. Meanwhile we have permitted those who are in favour of Jesus to admit him among the number of the Gods, and we have threatened with death those who speak ill of Christians. As to the Jews who dared to crucify Jesus, concerning whom I have heard that he was worthy neither of the cross nor death, but that he rather merited honour and worship, as soon as I am free from war against the Spaniards who are in revolt, I shall look into the matter and give them the treatment they deserve.”

Moses also gives us two other letters purporting to be written by Abgar on the subject of the new healing.

“Abgar, King of Armenia, to my nephew Nerseh. Greeting.

“I have read thy friendly letter, and I have delivered Peroz from his chains and pardoned his offences. If it suits thee, place him at the head of the Government of Nineveh, just as thou pleasest.

“Concerning the matter of which thou hast written, asking me to send thee the physician who works miracles and preaches another God greater

than fire and water, so that thou mayest see and hear him; he is not a physician according to the skill of men, but a disciple of the Son of God, Creator of both fire and water. He has been sent into Armenia, which had been forbidden him.' But one of his principal companions named Simon has been sent to Persia. Seek for him and thou shalt hear him, and thy father Artasches will do so too. He will heal your diseases and will show thee the way of life."

"Abgar, King of Armenia, to Artasches, my brother, King of Persia. Greeting.

"I know that thou hast heard speak of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, which the Jews have crucified, and who is risen from the dead, and who has sent his disciples throughout the world to teach men. Now one of his chief disciples, named Simon, is actually in thy Majesty's kingdom. Seek him and thou shalt find him. He will heal all thy diseases, and will show thee the way of life. Thou wilt believe on his word, as well as thy brothers and all those who willingly submit to thy authority. It is sweet to me to think that those who are my relations in the flesh will become also my well-beloved brothers in the spirit."

After the death of Abgar, the story goes, the kingdom of Armenia was divided between Ananoun, his son, and his nephew Sanatrouk. This nephew reigned in Armenia, was converted, but apostated, through fear of the Armenian Satraps. Thaddeus and his disciples were martyred in the province of Schavarschan, and various relics and superstitions became attached to their memories.



But it still remains of paramount interest to us to trace the first authentic beginnings of these stories, to try and determine whether Abgar ever sent the first letter to Jesus at Jerusalem and received an answer in return.

Moses further states at the end of chapter thirty-six of his History: "Laboubna, son of the scribe Aphsohadar, wrote down all these events which took place in the days of Abgar and Sanatrouk and deposited them in the archives of Edessa."

At last the custodian of a Venice library thought he had found a fragment of it, which V. Langlois published in 1867 in a collection of Armenian histories. Meanwhile earlier still, in 1848, Cureton discovered a large part of it in a Syriac MS. in the British Museum; and lo and behold! as if legends pervaded the scholastic atmosphere, P. L. Alishan, in the "*Bibliothèque Imperiale*" at Paris, discovered and copied in 1868 an Armenian version of the story of Abgar, this being a much briefer account than we get in our good Moses of Koren.

After this the plot thickens, for in 1868 there also comes from the press of the Patriarch of Jerusalem another edition from the MS. in the patriarchal library, edited by an anonymous monk, who expresses the opinion that the MS. is an abridged one, because it is only a translation of Laboubna made by Eznik or by Joseph de Palin, who was sent to Edessa to make copies of such matter in the Edessene archives which might prove useful for theological purposes, so that they omitted historical details, and did not translate

the text fully. Eight years later, from the Imperial Library of St. Petersburg, comes yet another MS. edited by George Phillips, who is of the opinion that both the Syriac and Armenian texts are complete, and there is nothing else to be found. After which, all the chief scholars and authorities took the matter up—Zahn, Lipsius, Mattes, Dashian, Harnack, and Tixeront.

According to their conclusions, it is a legend of the third century, which, written down, constituted the MS. which Eusebius saw. In A.D. 232 the Syrians obtained from Alexander Severus (on the return from his victory over Artaxerxes) the body of the Apostle Thomas, reclaimed from the kings of India. This was placed, encased in silver, in Edessa. Tixeront thinks that the Abgar legend may have been composed about this time. He admits that there is nothing in the least improbable about the story itself. It was indeed more than possible that the fame of Jesus as a healer of disease should have spread far beyond the confines of Palestine, but he criticizes the authenticity of Abgar's letter because it is couched in the language of a Gospel: "the deaf hear, the dead are raised." He feels its author must have copied a Gospel.

But Harnack himself testifies: "Eusebius thought this tale of great importance," and Eusebius attained his distinguished position in the Church about A.D. 313, and testifies himself to having seen the manuscripts from the archives of Edessa. Now, we can hardly imagine a man of Eusebius' studious and

accurate habits mistaking an MS. little over sixty years old for one supposed to have been written at the time of our Lord. There must surely have been a marked difference between an MS. composed practically within the Bishop's lifetime and one composed two hundred years previous to that.

The legend must therefore still remain shrouded in its mysterious veil of tradition, but at least a veil shot through with gleaming threads of truth. We cannot wholly disbelieve the childlike eagerness of Abgar to receive a visit from the famed physician of Galilee, or the stir and enthusiasm with which, after long waiting, the Evangelist Thaddeus was received in the "small but beautiful" city, whose waters were said once to have flowed by the fairest garden of earth—Eden itself. Eve, driven from her first Paradise, may have rested in that very place, and have received the message of hope that there should some day be born to her seed One Who would bruise the serpent's head.

The place is very, very old. Ever since "Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him," generations of barbaric, bloodthirsty men have destroyed each other and perished from the face of this earth—"insects of an hour, that hourly work their brother-insect wrong"—and the earth is stony and arid with the self-inflicted pain and torture of the Adam race. The beams of betterment and salvation, alas! are few. Why not preserve them? why not—little shafts of light in the blackness of mortal history—let them shine?

In some manner the blessings of Christianity found lodgment in Mesopotamia at an early date. After the flood of A.D. 201 there was found in the débris of Edessa the Christian Church, and its list of bishops dates back as early as A.D. 313. Neither has all memory of Christian doctrine entirely perished to-day.

The people whom Dr. W. A. Wigram has designated "our smallest ally" in the Great War are the remnant of these early Assyrian Christians.

To understand how these things can be, we must briefly review the main divisions into which the original Church Universal soon became divided.

When the Emperor Constantine (A.D. 265-336) made Christianity the State religion of the Roman Empire, Rome became the primacy of honour and pre-eminence, that of Alexandria and Antioch being next in order of seniority. Later, when Constantine made Byzantium (which still bears his name in its modern form, Constantinople) his new capital, the Bishop of the Emperor's city was not slow to take advantage of the change, and within fifty years a General Council ruled that "the Bishop of Constantinople shall have the primacy of honour after the Bishop of Rome, because the city is New Rome."

According to the varying fortunes of East and West, Rome and Constantinople fought each other for leadership and dominion right down through the Middle Ages, truces patched up for political purposes only serving for a time to smother the flames of animosity which ever again broke out into fresh conflagrations.

But until the fifth century there was no division in the matter of doctrine, the Arians having been already cast out of the Church by the Council of Nicæa, A.D. 325. In A.D. 432, however, the third General Council, that of Ephesus, condemned the doctrine of Nestorius; and twenty years later Eutyches and his followers, who went by the name of Monophysites, refused to accept the decrees of the Council of Chalcedon. As the breach between Greek and Latin civilization widened, the Western Church became the Church of Rome, while the four Eastern Patriarchates—Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem, together with the Church of Cyprus—formed the nucleus of what is now the Holy Orthodox Eastern Church. To a third category belong a group who adhere neither to Rome nor to Constantinople, and they comprise the Nestorians on the one hand, and on the other, the descendants of the Monophysites—the Jacobites, Copts, Abyssinians, and Gregorian Armenians.

Nestorius, who thus caused the first serious split in the Universal Church (since the followers of Paul of Samasata never became powerful), was Patriarch of Constantinople from A.D. 428–431.

His rigid asceticism had developed an uncompromising rigour of mind in his attitude towards those who did not exactly agree minutely with him on points of doctrine. In his very first patriarchal sermon he is reported to have addressed the Emperor in these stirring words :

“Purge me, O Cæsar, the earth of heretics, and

I in return will give thee heaven. Stand by me in putting down the heretics and I will stand by thee in putting down the Persians."

Alas ! it was Nestorius himself who was accounted a heretic, and hunted from place to place as fiercely and unmercifully as ever he had wished to hunt others. The Nemesis of life is swift and strange. Most unjustly did he suffer, for his views would certainly obtain a fair hearing in these modern times. His chief offence lay in the fact that he refused to call the Virgin Mary "Theotokos," the Mother of God. "Let no man call Mary the Mother of God," he declared, "for Mary was a human being, and that God should be born of a human being is impossible." He did not deny the divinity of Christ ; he only wished to differentiate between the Son of Mary and the Son of God ; but an angry Council condemned him unheard. He withdrew into his old monastery of Euprepus near Antioch, but was not allowed to rest in peace, the Emperor banishing him first to "rose-red Petra" in Arabia, then to an oasis in Upper Egypt, from whence he wandered, harried and persecuted in all parts, until his end. But his beliefs did not die with him. They contained a germ of life which could not be extinguished, and the rise of Nationalism was fast causing all forms of theology to retain and develop their own special characteristics.

Strangely enough, it was among the Persians, the very people whom Nestorius was so anxious to subdue, that his followers found the greatest welcome.

Up to the year 424 the Persian Church had formed a part of the Patriarchate of Antioch, under the immediate jurisdiction of the Metropolitan of Edessa, and it was to these bishops that Nestorius looked for support in his struggle with his rival, Cyril of Alexandria.

All these races of Asia Minor were fretting to be free from Byzantine rule. If the adoption of a so-called heresy expedited their own ends, they were willing to give it due consideration, and to absorb adherents of the new creed into their territories when banished from their original homes.

The Nestorians kept their spiritual light burning. For a while they could not make much headway against the Zoroastrian Sassanids, but when both the Persian dynasty and its priestly caste were overthrown, and the entire Sassanid Empire was conquered by the Moslem Arabs in A.D. 641, the Nestorians formed the aristocracy of learning and culture at the new courts. They became physicians, scribes, secretaries, and tutors to their new temporal masters, and tradition affirms that Mahommed himself thought so highly of them that he made many concessions in their favour, and granted them various valuable privileges. Nestorians were made free from military service, their customs and laws were to be respected, and their clergy exempt from the payment of tribute. This bespeaks a wonderful triumph for a small Christian minority, abhorred and persecuted as much by the main body of their so-called Christian brethren as by the avowed heathen. The "heretics" were making good. Their mis-

sionaries spread into Arabia and the Persian Gulf, to the southernmost parts of India, to Ceylon, through Persia again into remote Tartary, into Afghanistan, Siberia, and to the eastern coasts of China. In 1625 Jesuit missionaries, at a place called Si-ngan-fu, in the Chinese province of Shen-si, found a tablet erected in A.D. 781 by Nestorians to commemorate the beauty of the Christian religion, and its widespread propagation in the Middle Kingdom. We may read all about this engrossingly interesting matter in Pauthier's *L'Inscription Syro-Chinoise de Si-ngan-fu*, published in Paris in 1858, and in just what manner some intrepid Mesopotamian monk had carried to the yellow peoples the story of the "illustrious and honourable Messiah" nearly thirteen centuries ago.

Legends in the twelfth century gathered round the name of one "Prester John," evidently a corruption of the title Presbyter, who was supposed to be a great Christian monarch reigning in the mysterious depths of Central Asia; and while we are on the subject of legends, and our ears are atune to catch the quivering overtones of Divine harmony piercing the monotonous drone of material history, let us listen for one moment to the story of a certain monk, by name Mark, who lived with a great friend—the pair of them hermits together—in some retreat in the Chinese Church, and whose careers exceed the romance of any fairy-tale ever penned.

Mark became weary of his narrow life. His spirit stirred within him, and he felt a call to go westward. In spite of protests from relations and



rulers, he induced his companion to set forth with him on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. After unspeakable hardships they succeed in penetrating into the province of Azerbaijan, where they meet the Nestorian Patriarch; "Mar Dinkha." They then push on to Baghdad and worship at the shrines of "Mar Mari" (Mari was a disciple of Thaddeus), the Prophet Ezekiel, and various other saints, and then are glad to rest in a monastery, where they would willingly have remained a long while, but their new friend, the Patriarch, stirs them to fresh activity.

The pilgrimage to Jerusalem is renewed but fails, and the Patriarch then consecrates Mark Bishop of China, and shortly afterwards dies himself. Mark is elected to succeed the good old man and patron, with the title of "Yahb-Allaha III.," which means "the God-given."

In course of time Argon becomes the Il-Khan or ruler of the land, and this Argon is anxious to make an alliance with the Pope and with the princes of Europe against Egypt, and he asks the Patriarch to find him an envoy. Mark nominates his old friend and companion Barsoma, and he sets out with a suitable retinue on the Il-Khan's mission. He travels to Constantinople by way of Armenia, Georgia, and the Black Sea, pays his respects to the Emperor Andronicus II., and then takes ship for Italy, noticing, by way of entertainment on the voyage, Stromboli in eruption, and arrives at Rome just after the death of Pope Honorius IV., where he is introduced to the College of Cardinals. A strange ghost from the

past this !—a Chinese Nestorian Christian, who can speak to their Eminences of the College of another Pope in the East, and of a multitude of believers, the spiritual sons and daughters of a despised heretic extinguished long ago at the Council of Ephesus.

Once in Europe, our ambassador has an interview with “King Alangitar in Kasonia,” who proves to be the King of “Angleterre,” Edward I., at that time living in Gascony, who welcomes him with all the hospitality and goodwill which his seventh descendant would have shown, and assures Barsoma that the kings of the Franks wear the Cross on their breasts to show their determination to recover the Holy Land. Barsoma returns to Rome, joins with the new Pope Nicolas IV. in celebrating Easter week, 1288, receiving the Sacrament from him—a very pleasant example, even if tardily evidenced, of mutual Christian toleration—and he then returns home to Patriarch Mark, laden with letters, presents, and good will. This Patriarch, this obscure Chinese hermit, ends his ecclesiastical career bearing rule over twenty-five Metropolitans and two hundred and thirty bishops, his government extending from Ceylon to Siberia, and from Socotra to Samarkand.<sup>1</sup>

Legend, yes ! but Legend with a sound historical background, and infused with the ever-witnessing philosophy and prophecy of the Christian life :

“He hath put down the mighty from their seat, and hath exalted the humble and meek. He hath

<sup>1</sup> From *Mosul and its Minorities*, by Harry Charles Luke.

filled the hungry with good things, but the rich he hath sent empty away."

It would be well if we could leave the descendants of Thaddeus and Mari in the golden age of their achievements, in a mellow atmosphere of intelligent scholarship and the courteous grace of benevolent courts. But the storms of human passions and savagery were not yet stilled in the cradle of mankind.

A barbaric cyclone burst over Asia, the terrible scourge of the Mongol rebel, whom Tennyson has described in his lines :

"Ages after, while in Asia, he that led the wild Moguls,  
Timur, built his ghastly tower of eighty thousand human skulls."

In the welter of destruction and desolation the Nestorian Church well-nigh perished. A remnant arose from the chaos and began to take stock of their position. Nestorians of the plain of Mosul were glad of help from Rome, and under Pope Julius III. were formed into a separate Uniate Church, henceforth to be known as the Chaldæan. The handful of the original Church took refuge in the Hakkari Mountains.

At Gudshanes, one of the wildest valleys, the Patriarch, who assumes the hereditary title "Mar Shimun" (the Lord Simon), established in 1662 the headquarters of the sect. From then onwards the Khurds were to be their enemies, and these people of old Assyria maintained their existence by a kind of mountain guerilla warfare, much as the Highlanders of Scotland supported life under the Stuarts. The feud between Assyrian and Khurd was fierce and

deadly, and while the Khurds did not hesitate to address their dogs in Syriac, the Assyrians responded to the challenge by addressing their dogs in Khurdish. It is this little company of Nestorian Highlanders who proved "our smallest ally" in the Great War. When the Turks threatened the Patriarch Mar, Benjamin Shimun, a young man of only twenty-four years, that his younger brother Hormizd, then in Constantinople for his education, would be killed if they did not keep quiet, the Mar replied: "My people are my sons, and they are many. Hormizd, my brother, is but one. Let him therefore give his life for the nation."

It was, therefore, but fitting that when this brave little nation was almost decimated, its last refuge should have been the camp the British army established for them at Baquba, and that the heir to the Patriarchate, then but a lad of twelve years, should finish his education under the Dean at St. Augustine's College, within the precincts of Canterbury Cathedral, England, before returning to face the problems of the future, which we trust may be worked out under Iraq rule and a British connection.

In this wise does the legendary, mythical past boom with a series of sudden rock-rending shocks into the vivid, practical present. Who among us can adequately portray the drama of Christianity? Who can fathom the currents of its living force flowing in hidden channels, welling up in secret springs? To the history of the elusive, mysterious East, with its strange anomalies of rapacious passion

and mesmeric sleep, its shifting superstitions and traditional truths, its extravagant poetic imagery and its ancient accurate science, these words of George Fox apply—words quoted by that great interpreter of both men and history, Charles Kingsley :

“ And I saw that there was an Ocean of Darkness and Death : but an infinite Ocean of Light and Love flowed over the Ocean of Darkness ; and in that I saw the infinite Love of God.”



## CHAPTER VIII

### A BIRD'S-EYE VIEW OF AN EARLY CHURCH





## CHAPTER VIII

### A BIRD'S-EYE VIEW OF AN EARLY CHURCH

WHILE we are more concerned in these pages with the record and traditions of the Founders of the Christian Church than with the edifice itself, an old print coming to light in a publication of 1689, giving both the exterior and the interior of a typical Early Church building, is so unusually fascinating that it cannot fail to be of interest to modern readers. This rare book was penned by Sir George Wheler, a Prebendary of Durham Cathedral, and is entitled *An Account of the Churches or Places of Assembly of the Primitive Christians described by Eusebius, and Other Observations.*

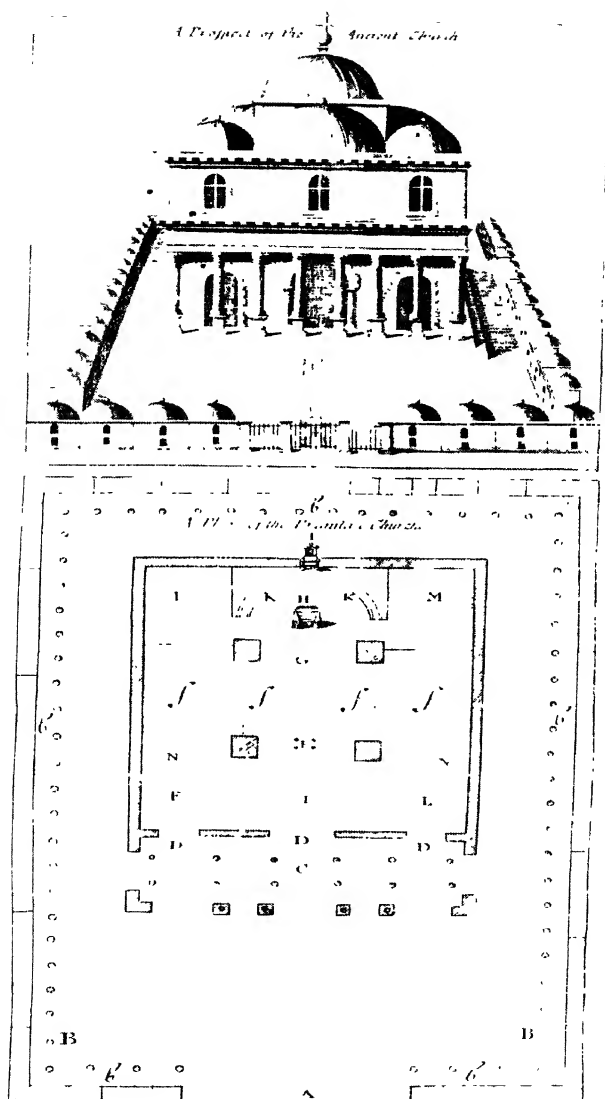
By the kindness of Bodley's Librarian at Oxford, we are able to reproduce two of the plates illustrating a typical church, such as the first church at Jerusalem, Tyre, or Constantinople.

We know that the Christians first met in their own houses, and that this custom probably developed into the habit of meeting at the home of the one who had the best accommodation to offer. From the pagan writer Lucian we learn that the Christians used to meet in an upper room adorned and gilt with gold; and Justin Martyr, who lived in later

times, describes "great meetings in one place every Sunday from all the neighbouring countries to the great towns and cities."

The secluded "upper room" of a private residence was suitable both from the standard of economy and protection, but when the time came that a single room could no longer hold the crowd of worshippers, and many church activities, such as the care of widows and orphans and the distressed poor, called for more space and for suitable offices, a type of building sprang into being—a modest temple, reflecting in some degree the pattern of the Jewish Synagogue and of Greek and Roman shrines, but outlined also in an original way, in a manner adapted to a new faith and a new company of people.

Look then at this drawing of a primitive Christian church. You will see that it is built in the middle of a large piece of ground, which was called the court or yard. Eusebius, in describing the church at Jerusalem, calls it the "first court." It would be entirely walled in, and we may suppose that it was sometimes designated as the "Martyria," as being the place where they could bury the martyrs free from molestation. We can see in this surrounding courtyard the first beginnings of our church cemeteries. The wall of this outer court sometimes had cloisters added to it—the shade would be so welcome under the glare of the Eastern sun; the Church of the Apostles at Constantinople had such a cloister—and to this would be added apartments for church work, rooms for the Bishop and presbyters, places of refuge



Exterior and interior of a primitive Christian Church, from an old print of 1689



for the needy, etc. It reminds us somewhat of the Pilgrim Settlement at Leyden in 1612 before the momentous voyage in the *Mayflower*. We read of the property they bought on Bell Alley, the house fronting the street, and a courtyard at the back, round which they built twenty-one little cottages to shelter their little company.

According to the plan of this first Christian church, we see, then, entrance gates in the centre of the outer wall, leading straight on to the portico, a Greek design of pillars raised on steps. These pillars in pagan temples were often of marble, and extremely beautiful, and adorned with matchless sculptural decoration.

From the portico the entrance into the church was by three large doors, the biggest in the centre. They were called "the great doors," and occasionally "the beautiful gates," although this was a term sometimes applied also to the chancel. They lead into the body or nave of the church and the two smaller doors lead into the aisles. The roof, composed of a series of domes, is typically Eastern. The men sat in the middle of the church, the married women on the one hand, the virgins on the other. In some places there were galleries over the aisles hidden by a lattice. The clergy occupied the top or eastern portion, next came the faithful, and the learners were placed at the back near the door. Penitents were kept strictly in the outer court.

The "ambo," or reading-desk, occupied very much the same position it has in the English Church

to-day—that is, about the middle of the church, at the doors of the chancel. It was raised on two flights of steps. A royal personage, such as the Emperor, would have his seat there. Singers, also, were placed there to begin and lead in the psalms.

The Holy Table or altar (of which there was only one) was placed simply in the middle of the chancel. It was generally made of stone, and stood on four low pillars. Beyond this were circular steps, with the throne, sometimes also called the mercy-seat, richly decorated with gold, and on this throne were placed the Holy Scriptures, the *Law of God*. Here, at the top of the steps, the Bishop and his presbyters used to sit together.

Zozomen informs us that St. John Chrysostom was the first to preach from the reading-desk, because of the multitudes who thronged round to hear him.

There were also two little rooms, one each side of the chancel, one for preparing and storing the Sacrament, and one in which to keep vessels and vestments.

From these unpretentious beginnings sprang the vast cathedrals of mediæval Europe, with their lofty intricacies of nave and transept, their gleaming windows, their mighty towers, their resounding belfries, their delicate lace-work in stone of Gothic inspiration, miracles of skill, storehouses of treasure. Would that they had retained the spirit of those first simple churches, humble shelters “from the stormy blast,” but nevertheless a true and living witness to “our eternal home.”

CHAPTER IX  
JAMES ALPHÆUS





## CHAPTER IX

### JAMES ALPHÆUS

OF James Alphæus, or James the Less, as he is sometimes called, little is known. He has sometimes been confounded with James the Lord's brother; but as has been pointed out in the first chapter, James the Less was already numbered among the chosen Twelve *before* the conversion of Jesus' own kith and kin. All that we can say regarding this James is that a strong tradition exists in Spain that Christianity was established there by a St. James, in later centuries confused with James, Bishop of Jerusalem. It is extremely improbable that James, as the head of the Jerusalem Mother-Church, should have left his post to embark on such a far missionary enterprise, but such a work may well have been undertaken by James, the son of Alphæus. We know he must have been a true and faithful disciple, for did not Jesus declare of them, "Those that thou (God the Father) gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost but the son of perdition"? and, while lacking positive evidence, we may assume that it was he who penetrated right up the Mediterranean and left the tradition in Spain of a holy life.

A curious old mediæval map of the Mediterranean

supports this tradition to some extent. It comes from a Dutch collection of manuscript, and was recently in the possession of Maggs Brothers, of Conduit Street, London, by whose kind permission we reproduce a photograph of it.<sup>1</sup> In mediæval maps of this type the East is at the top, the West at the bottom of the page, and the pencilled lines represent climatic areas. Being written in Latin, with amazing and cryptic abbreviations, it is a positive puzzle to translate. The kindness of one or two specialists at the job have enabled me to give the following approximate meaning of the letterpress.

On the top right-hand corner it reads: "*Vide in hac figura quomodo apostolorum audita est vox in omni terræ climatica*" ("See by this map how the voice of the Apostles has been heard in every clime"). On the left-hand corner is written: "*Hæc figura climatum secundum theologos qui partem, terra climatica considaverunt secundum naturalem et convenientem modum habitabilem hominibus*" ("This is a map of the climes according to the theologians who, in accordance with a natural and convenient method, have studied the region habitable by man").

Matthew is mentioned as being in Ethiopia (the old term for Arabia) and Thomas is placed "somewhere in the East of Asia where men are small and beasts are large."

Below it is stated :

"Compostella is a great city, where rests the body

<sup>1</sup> A reproduction appears on the cover at the front of this book.

of St. James, distant fourteen miles from the land's end [that would be Cape Finisterre, North-West Spain], seven hundred miles from Hambourg, and the same from Rome, at the extreme of the mild clime according to the map."

This town would be Santiago de Compostella, North-West Spain. Theodomis, Bishop of Iria, claimed to have been guided by a star to the spot in 835, and to have discovered the body of St. James, Bishop of Jerusalem. Undoubtedly the Spanish St. James came from Jerusalem, but was wrongly identified with James, Bishop of Jerusalem, for we know that that James was flung down from the Temple and buried without the city wall.

Therefore the inference is that Santiago honours the life-work of James, the son of Alphæus.



**CHAPTER X**  
**PHILIP AND BARTHOLOMEW**



## CHAPTER X

### PHILIP AND BARTHOLOMEW

**P**HILIP is a Greek name denoting "a lover of horses." The Apostle bearing this name may therefore have been of Greek parentage, but we learn from the Gospel of John that he was a native of Bethsaida, and in all probability he was a fisherman like his fellow-citizens, Andrew and Peter, since fishing was the principal industry of the place. His friend was Nathanael Bartholomew, the word Bartholomew simply signifying "the son of Tholmai." There was a sect among the Jews called Tholmæns, from Tholmai, a pupil of Heber, an ancient Hebrew master, and it is just possible that Nathanael may have adhered to that school of thought, as the fact of our Lord declaring him to be "an Israelite indeed," and Nathanael himself showing by his questions that he was well versed in the Scriptures, all tends to support the theory that he was a teacher belonging to a definite religious body.

We cannot help feeling that Philip was tremendously influenced by Nathanael, that he had a great admiration for him, as being a man of education and of a noble character. The two in times past must have spoken together of their nation, their God, and

the sacred promises made of redemption for their race. There is a great eagerness in the manner in which Philip rushed to Nathanael after he himself had been called by Jesus, and exclaimed : " We have found him of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of Joseph." And Nathanael, academic and cautious, replied : " Can any good thing come out of Nazareth ? " Philip, in the full glow and enthusiasm of his meeting with Jesus, replied quickly, " Come and see," and Nathanael came, and was equally impressed and convinced that Jesus was a mighty " Rabbi," yea, more, " the Son of God," " the king of Israel." The two decided to follow Him henceforward.

Philip's chief difficulty seems to have been that from the first ardent devotion to the personality of Jesus, he never seemed able to advance into the understanding of the Divine Principle of Christ, the power and the law by which Jesus manifested the Father. He had full faith in Jesus, but he was slow in gaining a metaphysical knowledge of the Truth which enabled Christ Jesus to be the Saviour of the world.

The Master sought to open his eyes to this Divine Truth. We read in the sixth chapter of St. John, that when He saw the multitude following Him, He said to Philip, " to prove him " : " Whence shall we buy bread that these may eat ? " but Philip could not conceive of a Divine source of supply, for he answered in an anxious, mundane way : " Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little."



Then again, when our Lord was speaking to His disciples concerning His departure from this world, and the many mansions in the Father's house, Philip, still dense and puzzled, says, "Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us," which drew from Jesus the patient, wistful rebuke: "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father. . . . Believest thou not that I am in the Father and the Father in me? . . . the Father, that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works" (John xiv. 8-10).

Perhaps none felt the inspiration of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost to be more blessed than Philip, for in unison with all the other Apostles he nobly set forth on missionary labours, and tradition tells us that he went into Phrygia with his old friend Bartholomew, and perhaps to Upper Asia, but most certainly to Hierapolis, a city devoted to the idolatry of a gigantic serpent. In all his journeys he was accompanied by his devoted sister, Mariamne. Legend will have it that it was she who made ready the bread and the salt at the breaking of bread, and helped Martha in the distribution of food to the multitude.

There are legendary acts of Philip, full of the adventures of these three, in which a leopard and a kid speak with a human voice; and they meet a dreadful dragon, over 100 cubits long, with a multitude of other snakes, and they are destroyed by flashes of lightning. They tell of their reception in Hierapolis, the conversion of Nicanora, the wife of the Proconsul, their terrible persecutions and their

miraculous deliverances, and the final martyrdom of Philip; but these apocryphal records are of a late date, later than the Acts of Thomas, and they are so embroidered with fantastic notions and grotesque imagery that it is impossible to quote them verbatim. They are marvellous examples of Oriental fairy-tale. Yet exaggerated as they are, and romantic to the verge of dreams, they are probably based on a remote series of events which very likely took place in a sane and no less miraculous manner. We know that horrible reptiles lurked in the deserts and swamps of earth, crawling in hideous length over its waste places, and terrorizing the inhabitants of lonely towns and villages. We see their fossilized bones in our museums to-day, and are moved at the stories of explorers who have traced their domiciles. The Apostles undoubtedly journeyed far and wide, often alone, seldom more than two or three in company. They would have been defenceless against these beasts and dragons if they had not possessed a dominion over them through the Spirit of God. It is natural, yea, necessary—from the view-point of the propagation of the Gospel of Christ—that many exhibitions and demonstrations of Divine power were made by each and every Apostle; and we may well believe that Philip freed Hierapolis from the incursions of the snake, and freed the souls of some of its inhabitants from the idolatry which held them in trembling bondage. If Philip was crucified there, as tradition asserts, it is not a matter of surprise, for Hierapolis was perhaps the most wickedly idolatrous

city of the Near Eastern world, devoted also to the worship of the goddess Cybele, whose rites were orgies of cruelty and sensualism.

Bartholomew is supposed to have been delivered from sharing the same fate at Hierapolis (Mariamne returned to the Jordan), and to have journeyed as far as that part of India bordering on Ethiopia. He is credited with leaving there the copy of St. Matthew's Gospel, which, over a hundred years later, was found by Pantænus, a skilled philosopher seeking Truth, and who, after coming to Christianity, preceded Clement and Origen as the head of the Catechetical Christian School of Alexandria.

Possibly Bartholomew's labours in India may have taken place before he joined Philip in Phrygia, as it is said he went from Hierapolis to Lycaonia, and finally reached Albanople in Armenia, another terrible place wholly devoted to idolatry, where he was cruelly crucified.<sup>1</sup>

Philip the Apostle must not be confounded with Philip the Deacon and Evangelist, who was one of the seventy disciples, and next to St. Stephen upon the list of original deacons. This Philip, probably born in Cæsarea, was the one who went into Samaria, and by his healings converted a multitude of people, so much so that Simon Magus, the Sorcerer, feigned conversion in order to gain power and wealth for himself. It was Philip the Deacon who met

<sup>1</sup> In Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible* it is stated that the traditions about Bartholomew's preaching the gospel in India and his martyrdom are entitled to no credit. Pantænus, however, evidently found a copy of the Gospel in these parts.

Candace's eunuch in the desert, and after preaching in the cities of the ancient Philistines (Azotus was the Ashdod of the Old Testament), he located himself at Cæsarea, for here Paul found him on his journey to Jerusalem (Acts xxi. 8, 9), living with his four daughters, all equally devoted to Christian teaching.

The two Philips are often confused. The Evangelist probably died in peace, but the two friends, the Apostles Philip and Bartholomew, both suffered the same fate as their Lord and Master.

It is practically impossible to trace the wanderings of the lesser known disciples with any certainty, but de Pressensé sums up the case with great truth and simplicity when he says, the certain thing is that "the first Christian Missionaries in these remote countries fell in the midst of their enemies, and the obscurity of their death is the best guarantee of their heroic fidelity."

CHAPTER XI  
MATTHEW, APOSTLE AND EVANGELIST



## CHAPTER XI

### MATTHEW, APOSTLE AND EVANGELIST

**M**ATTHEW, whose other name was Levi, was a Jew. His parents were Alphæus and Mary, but his father was not the same Alphæus as the father of James the Less. It is believed that his mother was a kinswoman of the Virgin Mary. He had taken office under the Roman rule, and was a publican or tax-gatherer, collecting the customs duty on goods imported or exported at Capernaum, and also receiving the tribute of passengers travelling by water.

The Romans esteemed their Revenue officials as highly honourable people. Indeed, it was a position usually only conferred on knights, which may sound quite startling to our English ears, accustomed as we are to the term "publican" applying only to the keeper of an ale-house. But these Roman gentlemen, sent into the provinces of the Empire to collect the tribute, usually employed the natives of the place to do their work for them. Such middle-men naturally took care to feather their own nest, and so came to be spoken of with execration by the populace as thieves and robbers, voracious beasts, etc. Moreover, a publican to the Jews, at the time of our Lord, was a perpetual reminder that they were a conquered

people, in bondage to a foreign power. The office was held in such abhorrence that they considered it unlawful to eat or drink with a publican or show him any courtesy whatsoever.

When Jesus called Matthew to rise and follow Him, He was calling one who was practically a social out-cast. But this does not by any means imply that he was not cultivated and a man of learning. The Gospel of St. Matthew is written in Greek, but it is more than probable that the first records of our Lord's life were written in Aramaic, the popular language of the times, which Jesus Himself would have spoken. Papias makes this significant reference to it. He says : " Matthew composed the Logia in the Aramaic language and each one interpreted them as he would." This Greek word *Logia* has the meaning of oracular sayings more than a consecutive narrative. It is the pronounced opinion to-day of scholars of textual criticism, that the First and Third Gospels borrowed much of their teaching from an original source now lost, which was probably just a simple statement of the sayings of Jesus. They feel Mark to be the earliest and most original Gospel, from which both Matthew and Luke copied ; but Dr. Arthur Headlam, Bishop of Gloucester, is strongly inclined to believe that Matthew first wrote down a collection of the sayings or discourses of Jesus, from which the Gospel which bears his name was compiled, and from which the other Gospel writers borrowed.<sup>1</sup> St. Mark,

<sup>1</sup> See *The Life and Teaching of Jesus the Christ*, by the Rt. Rev. Arthur C. Headlam, C.H., D.D.



fully equipped with the oral teaching and vivid recollections of St. Peter, did not need any other source of information. In any case the Gospel of Matthew was written expressly for the Jews of Judæa, probably under pressure of the last agonies of Jerusalem; and it is supposed that for eight years after the Ascension he preached the Gospel in Judæa. After this date there is no reliable evidence as to where he journeyed. Socrates, an ecclesiastical historian of the fourth century, speaks of him as preaching in Ethiopia or Arabia. Dorotheus says he was honourably buried in Hieropolis in Parthia; but it matters little to us where the resting-place of his mortal remains may be. The world remembers him as the recorder of the Sermon on the Mount; the shrewd, grasping, pitiless tax-collector, changed by Divine influence into the man who first voiced the wealth and the inheritance of those who were meek, merciful, and pure in heart.



**CHAPTER XII**  
**·**  
**SIMON ZELOTES**



## CHAPTER XII

### SIMON ZELOTES

ONE of the most interesting passages in the *Church History* of Eusebius reads :

“The Apostles passed beyond the ocean to the isles called the Britannic isles.”

Which Apostles ?

Evidence is now well established to show that Joseph of Arimathea came first, accompanied among others by Lazarus. To Joseph, King Arviragus granted twelve hides of land, including the Crystal Isle, one of the ancient names for Glastonbury, where the first church—the wonderful, miraculous little first church built of wattle, the most precious shrine of the early British people—was established.

The next great missionary was Simon Zelotes, one of the actual twelve disciples of our Lord. Both Nicephorus (II. 40) and Dorotheus, Bishop of Tyre (Synod de Apostol.) testify to his work in Britain; and when we come to examine the character of Simon himself, we see plainly that he of all the disciples was the man who would have succeeded in penetrating into the Isles of the West.

Who, then, was Simon Zelotes, of whom so little

is known, and whose name nevertheless appears of so much importance ?

This Apostle is sometimes called "Simon the Canaanite," but this does not mean that Cana was his birthplace. The word is from the Hebrew *Kanna*, meaning to be zealous, and is rendered by Luke (vi. 15) in Greek *Zelotes*. This name means that Simon was originally an adherent of "the fourth sect of the Jews," as Josephus calls the "Zealots," the followers of one Judas of Galilee, who fiercely rebelled against the Roman rule. It must ever be remembered that at the time of Jesus' ministry in Palestine the Jews had been conquered by Rome, and were a subject colony within the Roman Empire. They never ceased to antagonize this rule, sometimes secretly and sullenly, sometimes savagely and openly. The bitter opposition went on continuously until it culminated in the final rebellion and the utter destruction of Jerusalem by Roman armies.

That Simon had become a disciple of Jesus shows that he recognized in Jesus the promised Messiah of Israel. He must first have shared the prevalent hope that Jesus would espouse the cause of the Jews, and, leading a victorious rebellion against Rome, be a deliverer of His people in an earthly and human manner. Slowly he must have gained some understanding of the Master's words : "My kingdom is not of this world," "The kingdom of heaven is within you," and of the many parables of the kingdom which showed that Christ had come to occupy a spiritual, not a material throne. We know by his faithful

adherence to the Master, and his patient continuance with the other disciples, that he had completely renounced violence as a means of freeing his countrymen from the foreign yoke. He had learnt that regeneration must first be won in spirit and in truth.

Nevertheless there are certain phases of our Lord's teaching and certain commands which must have made a special appeal to the Zealot. Jesus in sending out the Twelve had expressly said :

"Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not; but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

"And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt. x. 5-7).

There is a beautiful tradition that Jesus actually came Himself to the British Isles when a boy. Many references and facts point to the conclusion that Joseph of Arimathea was a tin merchant, and travelled backwards and forwards to Cornwall to the mines there for this valuable metal; and it is supposed that he brought the young lad Jesus with him on one of these journeys. Since Joseph was related to the Virgin Mary—probably her uncle—he would have a feeling of guardianship towards her Son, taking a special interest in His education and development, and thus a voyage of this kind would be legitimate and natural.

"Here for a time the boy, obscurely great,  
Grew wise, and ripe, and strong."

The tradition lingers in parts of Somerset and Gloucestershire and in the west of Ireland that

Jesus visited the British Isles in this manner. The mystic poet, William Blake (1757-1827), has enshrined this tradition in his poem "Jerusalem," and his words, set to music by Parry, have been sung on public occasions since the War with a frequency that seems both a witness to the past and a prophecy of the future :

"And did those Feet in ancient time  
Walk upon England's mountains green ?  
And was the Holy Lamb of God  
In England's pleasant pastures seen ?  
And did the Countenance Divine  
Shine forth upon our clouded hills ?  
And was Jerusalem builded here,  
Among those dark Satanic mills ? "

The last line refers to the tin mines of Cornwall. The other name of Marazion (bitter Zion) in Cornwall is still Market Jew, and it is a most ancient tradition that the place was a colony of Jews who traded in tin.

Blake's poem ends with this spirited verse :

"Bring me my bow of burning gold !  
Bring me my arrows of desire !  
Bring me my spear ! O clouds, unfold !  
Bring me my Chariot of Fire !  
I will not cease from mental fight,  
Nor shall my sword sleep in my hand,  
Till I have built Jerusalem  
In England's green and pleasant land."

It could not have been known to Simon Zelotes (unless by special Divine revelation) that from these far-away little isles in the sunset would come forth in the fulness of time the Christian army which would deliver Jerusalem from the yoke of the oppressor, as the Holy City *was* delivered by Allenby



in 1917. But he must surely have experienced a sense of intense exaltation and joy, a consciousness of Divine direction, when, after preaching in Egypt and Africa, Mauritania and Lybia, he at last penetrated beyond the Mediterranean Sea, touched the English coast, and landed upon the English shore. The sense of solidarity and security, as of a haven under the protection of a Divine decree, which the isles, in spite of their battle-strewn history, persistently convey, must have filled his soul with peace; for Britain was destined to receive the Messiah the Jews rejected, and to maintain the truth of the everlasting Gospels, spreading the good news from Pole to Pole until "His kingdom come."

When these early missionaries succeeded in making converts, they must have found the Anglo-Saxon mind, rough and bellicose though it might seem, to be nevertheless of a most wonderful, childlike straightforwardness and purity. The old language is of a singular simplicity, for in those days there were none of the French, Latin, or Greek words which subsequently entered into it, and the Gospel narrative strikes home to the heart with a plain sincerity that almost borders on the sublime.

Jesus is always translated as "Haelend," the Saviour or Healer.

The disciples are called "learning-knights," the parables "by-*tales*"; our Master's wonderful works are described in this manner :

"Truly when it was made evening, when the sun went to settle, they brought to Him all the un-hale

and them that were mad. And all the city was gathered to the door. And He healed many that were oppressed with unlike ailings and many devil-sicknesses He outdrove, and did not let them speak for that they wist that He was Christ.”

Another passage reads: “To you is given to know God’s realm’s secret.”

How precious must that secret have been to the ardent, patriotic heart of Simon the Zealot!

## CHAPTER XIII

ANDREW AND MATTHIAS, THE FIRST AND  
THE LAST OF THE APOSTLES



## CHAPTER XIII

### ANDREW AND MATTHIAS, THE FIRST AND THE LAST OF THE APOSTLES

WE read in the first chapter of St. John's Gospel, that Andrew was first a disciple of John the Baptist, and that when John described Jesus as "the Lamb of God," Andrew and another disciple who is nameless followed Jesus as He walked, so much so that the Master turned and said to them, "What seek ye?" and they replied, "Rabbi, where dwellest Thou?" and they returned with Jesus, and stayed with Him that night.

Andrew then went in search of his brother, Simon Peter, and brought him to Jesus, telling him the great news, of which he himself was convinced: "We have found the Messias."

Dr. Mackintosh Mackay points out that this bringing people to Jesus was characteristic of Andrew. He brought his own brother, and he noticed the lad with the five barley loaves and two fishes, and brought him forward to Jesus at the time of the preaching on the Gadarean shore. Again, at the time of the Passover, when certain Greeks came to Philip wishing to speak with Jesus, it was Andrew who undertook to introduce them to the Master. Slight as the

references to Andrew are, they yet give us the impression of a sincere, unselfish man absorbed in the human well-being of his fellows. He was almost a prototype of Martha, as humanly busy in transacting the everyday amenities of life in the outside world as she was immersed in the details of domestic comfort within doors. He never seemed to have risen to any height of metaphysical perception or inspiration. The one occasion we have on record when Andrew seemed to desire actual spiritual understanding was when Jesus predicted the downfall of the Temple, and four of His disciples—Peter, James, John, and Andrew—had a long quiet talk with the Master concerning the latter days, because they had asked Him privately, “Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign when all these things shall be fulfilled?” (Mark xiii. 4), and the conversation primarily had concerned the Temple, and had been a question of what was going to happen historically to that actual building. It was a matter of human concern, not of abstract principles, therefore a matter which appealed to Andrew.

In perfect accord with this conception of his character is the tradition of his indefatigable activities in after years. According to Dr. Cave, his missionary province extended to the north of Asia Minor, along the Euxine or Black Sea, where, pushing eastward, he at length penetrated into the solitudes of Scythia, a wide term which would embrace Georgia, Tartary, North-Western Persia, South Russia, and even Siberia. Returning, he is credited with visiting

Trapezus, Nice, Chalcedon, and Heraclea, and Amastris, and finally to have spent some time at Sinope, where he eventually ordained Philologus, one of St. Paul's disciples, to be Bishop of that city. From Sinope he came to Byzantium or Constantinople and ordained St. Paul's well-beloved Stachys to be in charge there of the Church. Banished from Byzantium, he went to Argyropolis, where he preached for two years with great success, and after this he travelled over Thrace, Macedonia, Thessaly, Achaia, and Epirus, till he came at length to Petræa, a city of Achaia, where the end came.

Undoubtedly his sympathetic, practical humanity was largely expressed in works of healing, for romances of amazing miracles stick to his name as thickly as burrs to a fleece. The Apocryphal Acts of Andrew belong to the same class as those of Thomas, and may have been written about A.D. 260. Gregory of Tours, writing in Latin, and giving an abstract of the whole, says of them :

“Now I have come upon a book on the great deeds of St. Andrew the Apostle which, because of its excessive verbosity, was called by some apocryphal. And of this I thought good to extract and set out the virtues only, omitting all that bred weariness, and so include the wonderful miracles within the compass of one small volume, which might both please the reader and ward off the spite of the adverse critic.”

Then follows a long record of healings, both of disease, sin, and death—healings of every conceivable

shape and form, even to the raising of thirty-nine dead sailors washed ashore from a shipwreck. These acts portray the Apostle almost as a kind of magician, at whose simplest word devils are cast out, blind people restored to sight, wicked people withered up, armed men discomfited by an angel appearing in light, and flames of blazing fire quenched by the sprinkling of a few drops of water. It seems inadvisable to quote all the miracles at length, because it is impossible to tell where the truth ends and the romantic embroideries of the dramatic story-teller begin. With the healings in the Gospels and the Acts before us, and the experiences of our foreign missionaries in modern times, we may justifiably reconstruct for ourselves a picture of very remarkable events. Truth is so immeasurably more dramatic, more swift and terrible in its Nemesis than fiction, that it is almost impossible to paint in too vivid colours the catastrophic effect of fervent Christianity on the barbaric mind, or the mighty upliftings of the soul that becomes receptive to Christ in mind and body. Intellectual argument and spiritual searchings do not cling to the name of Andrew. They never did so in the Gospels themselves, but the human events of life, with all their moving, throbbing, excited drama—life, home, sickness, rulership, travel, money, good actions, bad actions—all these human matters, they are the substance of Andrew's works, and, whether rightly or wrongly chronicled, they remain in fantastic forms a witness of his work in a turbulent and idolatrous world.



The story of his martyrdom is briefly this : At Petræ, Maximilla, the wife of Egeas the Proconsul, became a convert, and, leaving her husband, would do little else but listen to the preaching of Andrew. The Proconsul, blind with rage and jealousy, after doing his utmost to tear his wife away from the new faith, ordered the Apostle to be cruelly crucified on a cross decussate in form—that is, in the shape of the letter X—where he hung alive for two days, still preaching to the people, and exhorting them to be constant and faithful to the Truth. His last discourse, from the text called by Flamion the “*Épître Grecque*,” contains this passage :

“Ye men that are here present, and women and children, old and young, bond and free, and all that will hear, take ye no heed of the vain deceit of this present life, but heed us rather who hang here for the Lord’s sake, and are about to depart out of this body ; and renounce all the lusts of the world, and condemn the worship of the abominable idols, and run unto the true worshipping of our God that lieth not, and make yourselves a temple pure and ready to receive the word. And hasten to overtake my soul as it hasteneth toward heavenly things, and in a word, despise all temporal things and establish your minds as men believing in Christ.”

And when the Consul, overawed and overpowered by the turbulence of the populace and the passion of the scene, wished to loose Andrew from the cross and take him down, the Saint would not allow him to approach, but praying cried :

“O Jesu Christ, let not thine adversary loose him that is hung upon thy grace ; O Father, let not this small one humble any more him that hath known thy greatness. But do thou, Jesu Christ, whom I have seen, whom I hold, whom I love, in whom I am and shall be, receive me in peace into thine everlasting tabernacles, that by my going out, there may be an entering in unto thee of many that are akin to me, and that they may rest in thy majesty.

“And having so said and yet more glorified the Lord, he gave up the ghost, while we all wept and lamented at our parting from him.”

Murillo has made this scene the subject of one of his finest paintings.

And now we come to one of the most picturesque and interesting legends of apostolic romance—the connection of St. Andrew’s Cross with the national flag of Scotland.

Tradition tells us that St. Andrew’s relics were taken to Constantinople, and that from thence some of them were brought over to Scotland in the eighth century.

The Scottish side of the story appears at the beginning of the sixteenth century, when Hector Bœce embodied in his *Chronicle* the legend of St. Andrew, which explains the origin of the banner bearing a white cross on a blue ground. On the eve of a battle with the English under Athelstan, about the beginning of the eighth century, King Hungus, the king of the Picts, saw the vision of St. Andrew, already their patron saint, appear to him in his sleep,

and assure him of victory. The legend reads that on the morrow "ane schinand croce was sene in the lift straucht above the army of the Pichtis, not onlik to the samin croce that the appostil deit on. This croce vanist nevir out of the lift quhil the victory succedit to Pichtis." The Picts, greatly heartened, advanced shouting, "Sanct Andro, our patron, be our guide," and utterly defeated the English who had been "effrayit, seand the croce schinand with awful beams in the lift." After this victory the cross of St. Andrew became the ensign of the Picts in battle, and this custom was continued by the Scots.

In the *Book of Pluscarden*, this victory and the conversion of the Picts and Scots are attributed to the relics of St. Andrew. By 1286 he had become sufficiently established in Scottish custom and conscience for his effigy to appear on one side of the Seal of the guardians of the realm, encircled by these words: "Andrea : Scottis : Dux : Esto : Compatriotis." ("Oh, Andrew, be thou the leader of the Scots, thy compatriots.")

Carrying his cross before the armies became crystallized in process of time into a banner with a white cross on a blue ground. It represented a cross shining clearly against the blue sky.

As representatives of the ancient Scythians, the Russians also acknowledge St. Andrew as their patron, and they use the flag reversed in colours, namely, a blue cross on a white ground.

This first disciple of our Lord has lived in the minds of men and nations as none of the other

disciples have done. He has stood in the direct line of human need, and men in human difficulties have appealed to his name. There is even a Burgundian legend of the fifteenth century, that his cross was brought to Marseilles in the first century by Estienne, a king of Burgundy, who made it his ensign in battle. From the House of Burgundy it passed with the heritage of Burgundy to Austria, and Philip the Second's ships actually flew it. This Burgundian cross was red. Dyed in either colour, blue or red, or left as a symbol of light in shining whiteness, this cross has stood before humanity, calling them to put their trust in a Power transcending earthly force.

And as the ancient forms and legends fade away into the mists of the past, the bows and arrows and armour of Mediævalism pass from our vision, the clash of lance and the blowing of trumpets cease in our mental ears, thought pictures again for one last impression and recollection the quiet evening by the lake-side, the grave, sweet, compelling figure of our Lord in the sunset glow, and the two other figures coming up with the tentative, wondering question : " Rabbi, where dwellest thou ? " and the answer, " Come and see," which had proved the supreme moment of direction and destiny in the life of Andrew.

Of Matthias, the last Apostle, little is known. The desire to fill the void created by the suicide of Judas Iscariot was expressed by Peter, and he suggested

the best lines on which to found a choice that he could think of, in these words :

“ Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his [Christ’s] resurrection ” (Acts i. 22).

The little company of believers which formed the first Christian Church—about one hundred and twenty names, we are told—approved Peter’s suggestion, and after prayer the choice fell by lot upon Matthias, and he was numbered with the eleven disciples. He seems to have been a good man. He is supposed to have worked first in Judæa and lastly in Cappadocia, where, amidst a wild and barbarous community, he was martyred about A.D. 61 or 64. There are fragments of a gospel or traditions which bear his name, but they are scanty and buried in questionable sources. Practically nothing is known about him beyond a general impression that he remained faithful to his calling. His election to office was an honest transaction, but it was a human one. The Church presented these two men, Barsabas and Matthias, as the only two possible nominees, and then asked God to show them which of these two He had chosen. The choice, in the first place, was made by the eleven Apostles themselves. It was their choice, not God’s. Long ago the prophet Isaiah had written : “ For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.”

The last Apostle was chosen by Jesus Christ Himself, as the other eleven had been chosen by Him personally, and the calling took place on the road to Damascus, when a Roman Jew, journeying in hot haste to destroy from out the synagogues every man or woman who dared adhere to the name of Christ, was suddenly blinded by a great light, and heard a voice saying: "Saul! Saul! why persecutest thou me? . . . I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks." And the man, trembling, astonished, and prostrate, replied: "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" It was then that God's choice was made. It was Saul of Tarsus who was to take the place of Judas Iscariot, Saint Paul who was to be the last of the Apostles, and—John the beloved excepted—the *greatest* of the Apostles, the finest teacher, the most widely travelled missionary, the one who burst asunder the narrowing fetters of Judaic rites and national limitations, and made Christianity a world-wide knowledge of God and Jesus Christ the Saviour of the world.

And let us humbly and reverently take the mighty lesson of his election to our own hearts, for the disciples, good and devoted men as they were—inspired, illumined beyond the capacities of ordinary beings—could never have dreamed of such a choice. For God can work changes in our own characters and environment and circumstances, and time and place, and give us work to do for Him of which we also have not dreamed.

## CHAPTER XIV

### • SAINT PAUL





## CHAPTER XIV

### SAINT PAUL

TO make an adequate record of the travels of St. Paul, to collect the names of the Churches he founded, to outline the spheres of his ever-expanding influence, would require a book to itself. Indeed many such books have already been penned, both by profound scholars and ardent revival preachers, on the life-work of this mighty champion of the Christian Faith. As the world speeds on, hoary with centuries, his character stands out as fresh and invigorating as in the years when his voice was heard in the market-places and temples of teeming cities, when his pen covered rolls of manuscript, to be eagerly read by bands of men devoting life, limb, and property to the revelation of Truth. It is not possible in this small volume to enter upon a chronology of his labours, or to quote from high authorities any analysis of his teaching. Both, we believe, are approximately well known, and profoundly appreciated. But it would be amiss to bring this summary of the lives of the Apostles to a close without reiterating certain facts about St. Paul, the careful research work of others—notably that of the Rev. R. W. Morgan—concerning his close connection

with the royal family of Britain, and the peculiar interest attached to the almost certain fact that St. Paul preached in the west of Britain himself.

These conclusions seem to demand re-statement, because the great mass of church-going people, both in Britain and America, are still in ignorance of them, or, if they have read them, still remain a little indifferent on the subject. It is well to have the picture of early Christianity clearly defined, to know the truth concerning it with as much certainty as possible. We have been so accustomed to visualizing St. Paul swaying the crowds at Athens or Melita or Cæsarea, that we have never pictured him in a beautiful spacious home, known as the British Palace, on the *Mons Sacer* at Rome, with little children at his knee—Timotheus, Novatus, Prudentiana, and Praxedes, the grandchildren of a royal commander-in-chief of Britain, heroic and famous hundreds of years before Alfred the Great was ever dreamed of. Yet this "Palatium Britannicum" was St. Paul's home; its owners, Claudia and Pudens, were his dearest friends—more, perhaps his actual kinsfolk—and this very building, known in time to come under the varying names of "Domus Pudentis," "Domus Apostolorum," "Titulus," "Pastor," and "Saint Pudentiana" actually became the first Church of Christ in Rome.

To understand how these things came to pass, certain facts must be borne in mind. Among the early converts made in Britain by Joseph of Arimathea and his company were Gladys, Eurgain, and Linus, the children of Caradoc or Caractacus, the King

of Siluria and commander of all the British forces against the Romans. This mighty warrior was finally overcome by the Romans in the autumn of A.D. 52, and with his family was taken to Rome to appear in chains before Cæsar. His appearance and his defence on this occasion is one of the notable scenes of history. No general since the days of Hannibal and Mithridates ever created such excitement as this hero of forty pitched fields of battle. Three million people blocked the route in the hope of obtaining a sight of him. His preservation at the hands of the Emperor forms a singular, some historians even say a solitary, exception to the cruel fate usually suffered by the Roman prisoners of war. Instead of a miserable and a savage death, Caradoc was permitted to live in free custody at Rome, and to receive the revenues of his British kingdom forwarded to him by his subjects and council. His daughter Gladys, already, as we have mentioned, a convert to Christianity, was adopted by the Emperor Claudius, assumed the name of Claudia, and was married, A.D. 53, to Rufus Pudens Pudentinus, a Roman soldier of means, for whom she had already formed an attachment since the time he had been "prætor" of the camp at Chichester.

In this manner we find the royal family of Britain established in their own palace at Rome on the part of the *Mons Sacer* called Scaurus, every one of them becoming Christian, and the Palace itself the rendezvous for the literary and learned, and also a refuge and home for Apostles and disciples.

Now turn to the sixteenth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans and the thirteenth verse, and you will find it reads: "Salute Rufus, chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine"; and turn to the closing chapter of the Second Epistle to Timothy (this latter Epistle being written from Rome itself), and the twenty-first verse reads: "Eubulus greeteth thee, and Pudens, and Linus, and Claudia, and all the brethren."

The "Rufus" can be none other than Rufus Pudens, and the sentence "his mother and mine" suggests that Paul was a half-brother by a second marriage. Whether or not the Apostle, for whom so much care had been taken in early years to ensure his status of Roman citizenship, was actually related by ties of blood to the household of the "Palatium Britannicum," it is certain that he was on the most affectionate terms with them, and loved the four children of Pudens and Claudia as his own. Linus, the brother of Claudia, he consecrated the first Bishop of Rome, so we may say that Britain brought Christianity to Rome, and not Rome to Britain, the first organized Church in Rome being of British origin, with a British Bishop at the head.

Claudia's family continued to minister to St. Paul's needs to the very end, and after his martyrdom on the block of the State Lictor at *Aquæ Salviæ*, his remains were interred by them in their own family tomb on the Ostian Road.

The question of intense interest to us now is—Did St. Paul preach in Britain itself? There are

many evidences that he did so; indeed, it is almost inconceivable that, being bound by such intimate ties to the unique British family in Rome, he should not have made every effort to reach these islands. According to the Martyrologies of the Greek Church, he had already, long before he came to Rome, sent Aristobulus, the brother of Barnabas, to be a missionary bishop to Britain. The fine old King, Caradoc, was finally allowed to return to Britain, where he would be ready and waiting to welcome him; and indeed we can interpret St. Paul's own words, that he had been to "the extremity of the West," in no other way than to assume a journey to Britain. Theodoret testifies in A.D. 435: "Paul, liberated from his first captivity at Rome, preached the Gospel to the Britons and others in the West. Our fishermen and publicans not only persuaded the Romans and their tributaries to acknowledge the Crucified and His laws, but the Britons also, and the Cimbri" (Theodoret, *De Civ. Græc.*, off lib. ix.). Theodoret, Bishop of Cyropolis, ranks high as a man of integrity and learning, and his word may justly be honoured.

In A.D. 596 Venantius Fortunatus, in his *Christian Hymns*, speaks of Britain being evangelized by St. Paul:

"Transit et oceanum vel qua facit insula portum  
Quasque Britannus habet terras atque ultima Thule."

Testimony arises also from the British side, for in the ancient language are certain maxims which have

always been known as the "Triads of Paul the Apostle." These are wholly Christian in teaching, and of the ten preserved perhaps the quaintest and most philosophic is :

"In three places will be found the most of God : where He is mostly sought ; where He is mostly loved ; where there is least of self."

Remarkable as the discovery may seem that St. Paul and the royal British family of martyrs were buried in one grave on the Ostian Road, a still further startling assertion is made by the Venerable Bede, the famed historian of Anglo-Saxon history, who declares that, at the solicitation of King Oswry to Pope Vitalian, the remains of Peter and Paul and those of four other martyrs were removed from Rome to England, and were deposited at Canterbury, A.D. 656.

Whether England is thus permitted to enshrine the honoured dust of the greatest of the Apostles will never be wholly certain, but it is most certain that St. Paul has gripped the whole Christian life of Great Britain with an intensity and force which years cannot loosen. Not so much as a primitive father of lispering faith or a founder of ancient institutions is he cherished, but as a living mind, a captain and a leader, still urging the young and the vigorous ever forward in the line of duty to "fight a good fight." London's greatest Cathedral is rightly called by his name, and the love which that name inspires is evidenced by the vast sum of money which

has poured in for the restoration and repair of the building.

“The earth’s is the Lord’s, saith Scripture,  
The whole earth broad and round.

And verily God’s Own Temple

Is where true faith is found :

Is where a man prays purely, be it in barn or shed :

But here in the blessed stillness, with the vast dome over my head

And the light of Peace on the pillars, my spirit thrills to feel

That Holy ! Holy ! Holy ! is this place wherein I kneel.

Holy with thoughts of Heaven

From far-off, ancient days,

Since ever a call to worship

Rang in these crowded ways.

Holy by aspiration,

Holy by love of truth,

Holy by faith of manhood,

Holy by faith of youth.

Holy is this Cathedral since her first wall upstood

A witness to the people, teaching the way of good. .

So long she has reigned by the river,

A sign of what cannot die,

Holding the Cross above her,

Steadfast against the sky.

So long within the city, whenever her deep voice calls,

Men know the soul of London is sounding in St. Paul’s.”

*From The Gordon League Ballads.*

We have come to the end of our task. We have gathered together fragments and traditions of the earthly lives of those men who were most intimately associated with the life of the one incomparable and ever-glorified “Son of man” and “Son of God.” We thank them for every human effort, every struggle,

every tear, every pang of persecution. We are grateful for every word of truth, every promise of hope, every healing thought and deed accomplished by each one of them in whatsoever corner of earth—in the streets of her fallen cities, in the sands of her pathless deserts, in the isles of “the extremity of the West”; and we acknowledge the faith which the Apostles preached to be man’s only salvation, the only harbinger of past or present good. We are humbled and awed. We are conscious of the presence of God with these men, sustaining them in all their labours, for we know that they sprang from very lowly origins, and possessed but few advantages as the world counts education and prestige, and they could have accomplished little in their own strength.

We see Andrew, Peter, Philip, James, and John, simple fishermen, becoming Andrew, the lover and healer of mankind: Peter, the courageous evangelist of Christ to the Jews scattered abroad; James, the first witness by death to the certainty of everlasting life; John, the sublime interpreter of God as Love, the climax of all philosophy and all religion, the supreme revelator of the end of material things and incoming of millennial glory. We see Bartholomew, an insignificant teacher of a narrow Judaic sect, becoming the overthrower of idolatry in far countries; and his friend Philip wrestling with the curse of the serpent, and replacing it with the blessing of Christ; and we see Matthew, the shrewd, worldly-wise tax-collector, engraving on holy parchment the eternal principle of the Golden Rule—mercy, long-



suffering, and purity of heart. We find Simon, the hot-headed political agitator, travelling by slow, patient stages to the end of the then known world, to plant in a tiny group of islands the seed of the terrestrial and celestial Kingdom he loved, and which would arise only after patient centuries of growth, wars, tribulations, and regeneration. We see Thomas, the prosaic, practical carpenter, and Judas, a man who probably also worked with his hands, becoming metaphysicians in the picturesque, romantic, drowsy, sensually philosophic, savagely cruel kingdoms of the East. We remember James Alphæus and Matthias, just commonplace names, who remained faithful in isolated outposts of missionary enterprise; and lastly, we see one Saul, a Jewish bigot, transformed into Paul the Saint and soldier of Jesus Christ, and the great Apostle to the Gentiles, and all sorts and conditions of men, and we realize that they were one and all "endued with power from on high."

Our Master gave utterance to a very solemn promise concerning these humble, faithful, mighty disciples :

"Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel " (Matt. xix. 28).

It behoves us then, the heirs of their intrepid self-sacrifice, to hold fast the Gospel truth as they proclaimed it, since Christianity will not be judged

by sect or nationality or creed, but by its fruits, by its faithfulness to Christ. So that we, in our own day, in the ratio of our receptivity to Truth, and in the degree of our understanding and spirituality, may be able to affirm with St. John :       .

“That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life.”

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